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March 13, 2000 LB 1107

**PRESIDENT MAURSTAD:** Thank you, Senator Wickersham. Further debate on the Beutler amendment to LB 1107, Senator Dierks, followed by Senators Smith, Beutler, Janssen and Chambers. Senator Dierks.

**SENATOR DIERKS:** Thank you, Mr. President and members of the Legislature. I, too, would rise in opposition to this amendment. I guess that I have difficulty getting around some of the issues that come up with this sort of amendment when we went through a lot of this in debate on LB 806 a few years ago and that piece of legislation certainly didn't come out in favor of very many people in rural Nebraska, and it's difficult for me to buy into an amendment that would...that would limit the school districts in this state to 163. I don't know where that...where that number, how that becomes magic. We have been very successful in one piece of legislation that happened here a few years ago. It was called unified...unification bill and provided for a unified district that is in my legislative district and it is working extremely well. I think that when you examine what has happened to the Class VIs around the state, they have worked extremely well, and yet there seems to be an attempt every now and then for members of this Legislature to try to undo some of these things that we've done. And I visit with the members of this unified district frequently and my message to them always is, remember, it only takes 25 votes to undo what you've done. I think that you have to...I think someplace along the line we've got to provide some stability in what we've done out there and let these people work towards education as they know how. And for us to assume that there are things going wrong in those smaller schools with the smaller teacher-student ratio, that's silly nonsense. I was visiting with a young man from my district only yesterday. He told me that his daughter, who is a teacher in Texas, was named the Teacher of the Year in the West Texas school boundaries. She is a product of Ewing High School. She has taught in the Lincoln School System. Her husband happens to be with drug enforcement. They live in Texas now and that's where she is teaching, and the students that she has have the benefit of a young lady who got a great education at Ewing Public School System, Ewing, Nebraska. I'm not sure what the per pupil or the pupil-teacher ratio is there but it isn't as great as it is a lot of places, and I think that they do have an outstanding educational process