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is FA327, the handwritten amendment you gave me just a little bit ago? (Legislative Journal page 1086.)

SENATOR THOMPSON: Yes.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Senator Thompson, you're recognized to open.

SENATOR THOMPSON: Mr. Lieutenant Governor, members of the body, this is an amendment to part of the committee amendment that deals with the Master Teacher Program. The program is to reward quality teachers in Nebraska who have achieved a national certification, which is a very rigorous process. Currently, there are 8; nationally there are over 5,000 of these teachers. One of the concerns that was mentioned to me was that this was not a capped program. So this amendment would put a cap on the program, and then we can get to the discussion of the bill, and I think that would provide a comfort level for some of the people to be able to debate the bill knowing what we're talking about. So the amendment creates a cap on the two portions of the bill that were previously open-ended. The first one is on the number of teachers who could receive the \$7,500 bonus from the state, and what the amendment does was cap that at a total of \$1 million. If more than 133 teachers qualify for the bonus, and I again mention this is years and years off, the bonuses shall be reduced to that each equal...equally qualified Master Teacher receives the same amount and the statewide total doesn't exceed \$1 million. Some states have an open-ended program. One that just passed recently was an open-ended program. Other states have capped it. When you hit the cap, all the teachers who are certified divide the pot equally, and this would create the cap and divide that pot, but it would be many years down the road. If you've looked at the fiscal note on the Master Teacher Program, when it was created the department estimated we'd add 20 teachers a year. That's a guess but that's their best guess. So it would be a number of years before this...before we would get to a million dollar figure, but that, at least, would assure you that there would be a cap, and the way it would work was when we hit the cap the teachers that have the national certification would divide it equally. The second part that was open-ended was the program to help pay the fees for the national certification, which in the bill would pay half for teachers who