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SENATOR CUDABACK: Time.

SENATOR THOMPSON: ...as examples to aspire to within the profession.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Thompson. We're debating the Tyson amendment to the committee amendments to LB 1399. Those wishing to speak are Senator Stuhr, Thompson, Schmitt, Chambers and Vrtiska. Senator Stuhr.

SENATOR STUHR: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the Legislature. I oppose Senator Tyson's amendment. I believe that the Masters Program is an opportunity to reward teachers, give them incentive for setting a goal and improving their skills. I believe that when we look at student achievement that the most important ingredient is to have quality teachers. And I'm very proud to represent District 24 that has Helen Banzhaf as the math teacher in the Seward Public Schools, and she is the person that we have been talking about who has shared her experiences as she applied for the Master Teachers Program. No, all teachers will not be able to attain this, but I do feel that these Master Teachers will certainly be a model and a mentor in the schools where they teach and in the areas where they live. I would also like to just share a letter from a person that was actually applying for the certification. She said, I'm currently in the pangs of portfolio preparation. As we said before, this is a very challenging and time consuming process that has already changed my teaching. Before applying to become a National Board Certification candidate, she talked with several colleagues across the United States who were already certificated. They spoke with special respect for the entire process. Everyone felt that this experience dramatically enhanced the depth and dimension of their teaching and made them more effective mentors for colleagues. And this was one of the reasons that she applied. She says she feels that it gives a personal sense of renewal and rejuvenation; and even at this early stage of the process, she is feeling her own sense of rebirth. Regardless of the outcome, she feels that every ounce of effort will certainly be worth it. So I believe that this does provide for some rigorous standards that have never been before articulated, particularly on our state level. And it