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bringing it to us today. I think it's pretty well known that we have good quality schools and I'm glad to see some of the students here because our public schools do a very good job of educating our young people. We are seeing the test results from the testing that has been done of the students that they rank in the upper 10 percent of the schools in the country, and we're very fortunate and should be very proud of the educational quality that we have in Nebraska. And to show our appreciation to the teachers for that excellent education, we reward them by being ranked in the bottom tenth in the country of teacher's salary. Somehow that seems rather ironic and unfair. So what Senator Schimek is working at doing with this amendment is to provide at least some incentive so that those teachers do feel a little more appreciated and a little more rewarded than what we are currently doing. I'm hopeful that we can do more than this in the future. It's unfortunate that we have not been able to do more yet this session. I thank you, Senator Schimek, for your amendment and would encourage my colleagues to vote favorably upon it. Thank you.

**SPEAKER KRISTENSEN:** Senator Hartnett.

**SENATOR HARTNETT:** Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I rise also to support this program Senator Schimek, you mentioned service award strategy as part of this. What is that? Do you want to explain that?

**SENATOR SCHIMEK:** Service learning strategy, Senator Hartnett.

**SENATOR HARTNETT:** Oh, okay, service...oh.

**SENATOR SCHIMEK:** And it is a strategy that, and this is actually one of the side benefits I should have talked a little bit more about it, but it's a strategy that encourages children in the classroom to take more interest in and more...and participate more in their communities. We heard very excellent testimony from a teacher who drove in for the hearing that has been using a similar kind of strategy, and it's up in Elwood, Elmwood, and they've been doing some things on the Bess Streeter Aldrich home and some of the activities associated with that. It's been very, very beneficial to the students, too.