

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
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March 27, 2000 LB 812

Schimek, Tyson, and Senator Chambers. Senator Stuhr, on the Beutler amendment.

SENATOR STUHR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature. I believe that it's necessary that we have this discussion today. However, I am not in agreement with Senator Beutler's amendment that states that we shall...the state shall adopt the standards. I believe that the Board of Education has been working very hard in looking at the standards and they have left, at this point, up to the local districts. I believe that in Nebraska we are very much of a local choice state. We depend a lot on schools making those local decisions. State...a couple statements that I might just say, that state mandated standards means that the state is assuming that local schools are not competent to set standards and that they are probably currently doing a poor job of educating students, and I think this is very wrong because in Nebraska we rank in the top five states in any measure that we have chosen to use. In the ACT, the SAT tests we are always ranking very high. We already have many local districts that have set their own standards that are actually higher than what the state has been looking at. In fact, I have a list. I think that there are about 11 school districts that have set higher standards than what we are looking at, and maybe some of you are from those districts: Beatrice, Kearney, Milford, Millard, Omaha, Ralston, Scottsbluff, West Side, Orr (sic--Ord), Burwell, and Bellevue. So, again, we have a number of districts that have set standards even higher than what we are talking about in this particular amendment. Also, I believe if the standards are voluntary that the local districts also then have the opportunity to change them. I think this is something that the State Board of Education has set about to do, is work on those standards, and I think that that policy decision should be left to them and not to the Legislature at this time. I think that concludes my remarks on this particular subject and I'm hoping that you will oppose the Beutler amendment. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD PRESIDING

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Stuhr. (Visitors introduced.) Further debate on the Beutler amendment to LB 812, Senator Bohike.