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April 10, 2000 LB 1213

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Senator Bohlke, you're recognized on your motion to return LB 1213 to Select File.

SENATOR BOHLKE: Thank you, Mr. President and members. The reason we were returning this was to do two things: one Senator Raikes accomplished; the second was knowing that we no longer needed LB 1213 and recognizing there was another important issue from the Education Committee, and that had to do with the amount of money that we currently have for incentive payments when schools wish to merge, consolidate or unify. Because of the amount of activity that we have seen, we are not going to have the amount of money necessary to meet the full obligations that schools were anticipating. The original incentive bill states that if that is the case that then the amount of money will be prorated out because, if we go on to do that, it is the belief that many of those unifications will not proceed forward. In talking with the Department of Education, they had said in order to recognize the unifications that they know currently are being planned and what those school districts are planning on for money, it would be a cost of about \$500,000. Certainly, on the discussion of vetoes today, I have had a discussion on this issue. We know that this would not meet with favor and so Senator Coordsen and I have had a discussion saying that we want to bring this issue to you. I know that it's one that Senator Kremer was interested in. He signed the amendment and Senator Vrtiska. They both have schools who are planning to unify in their district, and probably had gone to the people in their district and said it will mean this X amount of dollars. That will not be...they will have to go back with a second message saying, when we prorate that out, that amount of money will not be there. The other part of the bill had extended the time that schools could qualify, and originally I thought I would be opposed to that when we did the original bill on mergers or consolidations. But then you remember we added unification, and when we added that new wrinkle for schools, that takes a great deal of discussion and a great deal of time and work between districts before they reach that unification agreement. It seemed reasonable, then, to extend that time; however, I do not believe that we're going to be successful. Senator Coordsen, I know has his light on. We could pass it here and probably maybe could generate the votes, but I do believe it would be vetoed,