

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

April 11, 2000 LB 26

the entire body because, as I shared with Senator Lynch yesterday, I'm not going to support the bill, not because I'm not concerned about children who go hungry, but because I don't believe that the bill really accomplishes what he set out to do. We do have provision for poor children to have a free breakfast. We do also have a provision for those who are lower income to have a reduced price breakfast. I'm told that the cost to those students is 30 cents. The bill in no way guarantees that those children will be charged a quarter. There's another issue that wasn't even addressed when this bill was on the floor and that is the low cost of the salaries to the food service people. I know firsthand these people work very hard, they work long hours and they certainly deserve to make more than they do, but there is nothing in the bill that guarantees, in fact, that school districts will use the nickel to raise their salaries. Now I would be very interested in a program where we might be able to actually put milk or juice or a muffin on the desk of every student that comes in. I know that there are children that go off to school in the morning at their parents' convenience because of their parents' work schedule, and there are also schools that don't want children to come early and be on the playground where they may be harmed or hurt in any way. So there are children who actually arrive when the bell rings and they're hungry too, but they don't have an opportunity to avail themselves of the breakfast program. If we were looking at putting something on their desk in the morning, where I know those children would get something to eat, then I would certainly be a supporter. If I were looking at something that would actually increase the wages to the food service people, I would be a supporter. But to put a nickel per breakfast into the hands of the school district I don't believe actually guarantees either of those things. And it is certainly not in opposition to Senator Lynch's intention to help those people out, because I would want to help them out. I just would like to do it in a more concrete way. And so, Senator Lynch, again, my regrets in not supporting your bill. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Senator Redfield. Senator Lynch.

SENATOR LYNCH: Mr. Lieutenant Governor and members, I have to respond in a couple of ways, and I appreciate the honest comments and concerns addressed by Senator Redfield and Senator