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April 11, 2000 LB 1107

SENATOR CUDABACK: We're discussion (sic) the motion to override the Governor's veto of LB 1107. Senator Wickersham, on the motion.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Thank you, Mr. President. A couple of things that have been said are...are interesting. One that somehow I think the implication is that K-12 education isn't a state responsibility. For those of you who have your copy of the constitution in your desk, and I hope that all of you do, I would ask you to turn to page 37 of the Constitution of the state of Nebraska and read the first section in Article VII. It says, "The Legislature shall provide". It doesn't say that school districts shall provide and it doesn't say the property tax payers shall provide. It says, "The Legislature shall provide for the free", the free instruction in the common schools of this state of all persons between the ages of five and twenty-one years. I think K-12 education is a state responsibility and it's a state responsibility to see that it's properly funded, it's proper...it's funded in a way that is sustainable and is funded in a way that our constituents, the taxpayers of the state of Nebraska, think is satisfactory. K-12 education, Senator Beutler, is a state responsibility. It's in the constitution. As for the notion that other political subdivisions somehow don't have statutory provisions that ensure that they receive specific amounts of state aid, either because they have a formula for that or because the amount is occasionally set in statute, you all should review the statutes. Because the community college formula does exactly what Senator Beutler is complaining about and we have set in statute the amount that is to be distributed to municipalities, to counties, and to cities as state aid and we have done the same thing for NRDs, something that Senator Beutler has complained about in the other text...context. We do the same thing for other political subdivisions. The school formula just turns out to be a little bit more complex and it turns out to be a lot more important because school levies are and will continue to be at least 50 percent of the property taxes that people in the state of Nebraska pay. They're going to continue to be the largest property tax users of all the political subdivisions in the state, that's with or without LB 1107. Now I've passed around a chart and it shows what has happened with property taxes since