

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
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FLOOR DEBATE

January 8, 2003

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN: Thank you, Senator Vrtiska. Are there further nominations? Seeing none, the Chair declares that nominations are closed. You have the ballots before you. Please write the name of the individual you are voting for. The Clerk and the Assistant Clerk will collect the ballots. At this time, I select a committee of three to come forward to tabulate the votes. They are Senator Brown, Senator Byars, and Senator Preister. When the three of you have finished voting, will you please come forward. (Visitors introduced.) The balloting is complete. Senator Vrtiska received 25 votes, and has been elected Chair of the Business and Labor Committee. Congratulations, Senator Vrtiska. We will now proceed to the election of the Chair of the Education Committee. The Chair would recognize Senator Raikes.

SENATOR RAIKES: Thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor and members of the Legislature. Please consider me a nominee for Chair of the Education Committee. I'm grateful that I've had the opportunity to serve in that capacity for the past two years. I hope you have found that issues you have presented to that committee have been handled efficiently and fairly. I have been the beneficiary of many lessons, including a few painful ones. It's my hope that given the opportunity to continue, I could use this experience on your behalf. Our focus is now on the coming biennium. No goal ranks, or should rank, higher for Nebraskans than that of providing educational opportunity. Public education is a major function, and indeed a major responsibility of state government. It is also a major financial commitment, both of state and local government. Further, state aid to schools is a major component of our tax policy, and critical to the long-term goal of reducing reliance on property taxes. Our considerable challenge will be to maintain and build upon Nebraska's strong tradition of excellence in public education, while sticking with our commitment to a fair and equitable tax structure, and making ends meet. Again, I'm grateful for the opportunity provided me. I hope you will see fit to allow me to continue in that event. I thank you for your support.

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN: Thank you, Senator Raikes. The Chair recognizes Senator Chambers.