

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

April 22, 2003 LB 759

he's already indicated. They're funds that were set up over a period of time and all of a sudden they lose their face somewhere in the process because many of us don't recognize where some of these funds are going. And I think it's good that this is brought before us during this particular time. I just wanted to also weigh in because I listened to Senator Bourne awhile ago and I agree with a great deal of what he said. Our schools are important. And I have said I was one of the dirty 30 who voted for LB 1085 simply because I didn't think we had much choice. Somehow we had to come up with some money. I've been criticized, as some of us have, but we're still...we did it simply because we didn't know what other alternatives we had. And as somebody indicated, it was a rush, rush thing, but that's behind us now. We have encouraged, and I'm sure none...nobody would object, we have encouraged schools and universities and colleges to be as efficient as they can, and I think they've taken that seriously and are becoming more and more efficient with the way they operate. But I have to reiterate, as Senator Bourne did, that education is the backbone of this state and I have said on the discussions that I've had with people in my district that the only tax increase that I could support would be that would go to education. Now there may be a variance to that somewhat, but that's my main goal if we're going to raise taxes, that we take care of education. We all know that the K-12 system has taken a serious downturn in the amount of money that they receive, and any time that we take away money, if we're going to keep the schools open, it means we're going to have local property taxes. And those of you that pay property tax understand that property taxes have gotten almost confiscatory in this state already. It was kind of interesting. I told some of my friends, and I think some of you have heard me say this, I have one farm that I had last year, when I got through with my renter and we figured up I owed him \$520 for farming my place. That's what kind of an income we got off some of the ag land in Nebraska, and yet taxes continue to increase. I know we have to provide the services are there and, again, the taxes are going to come from some place. And if we continue to take...reduce our support from the state level, it means local property taxes are going to go up. There's just no other way around it. I have listened carefully this morning and will continue to listen. I do support the first proposal that came