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LB 407, 574

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Senator Bourne, followed by Senators Smith and Redfield.

SENATOR BOURNE: Thank you, Mr. President, members. Just a few comments on what Senator Chambers said, and Senator Schimek talked about how this money goes to private schools and that, and I just wanted clarification and kind of go back a little bit. As I understand it, and I don't have any information here in front of me, I'm just speaking from memory from the hearing, these funds go to kids who are poor, who can't afford to otherwise go to school, but there is a provision, I guess, in statute that allows these scholarship funds to be used at some of the private universities. And when Senator Schimek kind of implied how, somehow, that these are like non-Nebraska institutions, and that's not accurate. Certainly they're private institutions, but they're not limited, meaning your child, my child, anyone in here's child can go to these schools. Are they a public institution? No, they're not, but what we have to remember is that these are scholarship funds that go to kids who are poor, who can't otherwise go to school. Now Senator Raikes has a bill that says, well, that's great, we should still continue to fund scholarships for poor individuals, poor kids, but they should go to the public university. And that's a policy decision that we may or may not make on LB 574. But again, when Senator Chambers says that the dilemma is the budget versus PEAP, I suggest that he's wrong. The dilemma is the budget versus these kids who are getting the scholarship money, who have demonstrated that they're poor, otherwise they wouldn't be able to qualify for these scholarships. So that's what the dilemma is. It's not the budget versus PEAP. It's the budget versus the needs of these poor...and by poor, I mean low-income students. Senator Chambers says there's no compelling reason, and I disagree with that. What happens if an individual qualifies, this person wants to go to Creighton? And the only reason he wants, he or she, wants to go to Creighton is because they have...they want to go to medical school. And this is a low-income individual, and I'm speaking for low-income individuals because that's who this money goes to, as I understand it. Now if I'm wrong, I'm sure Senator Chambers will correct me. But as I understand it, this money is available to