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LB 540, 680

Actually, my real goal in this is that...Senator Wehrbein has, as his priority bill, a study of schools and their possible consolidation in the state of Nebraska. I think that this should probably be done in the form of a study, to look at it. However, I would like to get some comment from the body here as to how you feel about this particular situation. And then we can...I may pull the bill. I probably will. Or pull the amendment, but I would like to leave it open for some comments for a few minutes. With that, I would return the rest of my time back to the Chair. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER BROMM: Thank you, Senator Jensen. Senator Wehrbein.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Mr. Speaker and members of the body, that bill is LB 680. And I would not...prefer not to call it a consolidation bill, although many will talk about it. Mine really is talking about effectiveness of delivery to...the proper subject matter to students across the state. I'm looking...it's in a priority bill that's not going to be heard this year. I'm toying with the idea of making a legislative resolution to have the study. That will be the issue. But we're going to start with...in my...at this point now, we're still in the process of refining it, and I'm working with Senator Raikes on this, but to look at the issue of adequacy of subjects, if you will, for many, not only small schools anymore, but even getting into larger small schools, if you will. If you remember Ernie Goss's report, 49 and a half percent school districts in Nebraska have under 100 students. Wyoming, the state of Wyoming, has none. So we do have a lot of school districts in the state. But the dilemma is now, even as important as I...the financing issue is, is the fact that many schools are not adequately providing the curriculum that their students need, because of various pressures. And I'm as concerned about that as I am about the financing side. And that's the way I propose to start the study, is to look at the delivery of these subject matter to the various students, and the fact that...it's a point I've alluded to in the past on this floor, not very long ago, in fact, as we put our budget together. As rural Nebraska shrinks in population, and it's a trend that is going on whether we like it or not, and I've used a lot of those figures, but the point is many schools are not