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LB 540

in spending authority for two years and a reduction in the cost/growth factor that affects needs, and then a gradual and smooth increase as you go into the out biennium. That, to me, is the proper way it should be done. That is the way that's consistent with the message we sent to schools. It's consistent with good fiscal management. It consistent with not bumping up the out year deficit by \$50 million.

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR RAIKES: And again, it's what happens if you don't do this amendment. This amendment, on the other hand, causes a jag upward for one year in spending authority, which destabilizes it, not only in that year but from then on. So again, I hope you are not led to believe by the handout that school spending has been held constant or flat for...and would be held flat for five years. That hasn't been the case. We are imposing restrictions on school spending in LB 540 without the amendment, and I would say those restrictions are appropriate. They're fiscally prudent. They're not easy, but they have been accepted by school systems. I think we need to stick with the plan that we have in place. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Raikes and Senator Wehrbein. Senator Connealy, on the Bourne amendment.

SENATOR CONNEALY: Thank you, Mr. President and members. I rise in support of the Bourne amendment. One of the things about LB 540 that's appealing to me is that it is temporary. A 0 percent growth in authority affects different districts different ways, but in reality it is a holddown on spending. It is a cut to education, and I think that schools and all of us are willing to do that if it's a temporary thing. I think that this amendment reflects that the underlying premise of how we do school funding. Though it does drive costs up, it is good for kids. It allows schools to improve. It allows a school system that we have here in Nebraska to be as good as it has been, and to continue to grow and provide the kind of services that we all in Nebraska are very proud of, because that's one of the real benefits we have by living in Nebraska is that we have a school system that works, that provides a high quality education for