

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
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FLOOR DEBATE

May 13, 2003

LB 407

adopted.

CLERK: Senator Brashear would move to amend, AM1827.  
(Legislative Journal page 1761.)

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Brashear, to open on your amendment,  
AM1827, to LB 407.

SENATOR BRASHEAR: Mr. President, thank you. Members of the body, as a preface, let me indicate that the primary reason for doing this is that I believe that it, in my judgment, is a relatively...all sums are important, but it's a relatively small sum. It affects very directly a significant number of children and it's one of those cuts that reduces our opportunity for matching funds and the opportunity to leverage money for the benefit of a program. The amendment presents a relatively minor adjustment to the budget and one I would suggest to you that, while it has no direct relationship, there...I submit that it will make...have no impact because of the fact that we have not yet saved the money which we are...or have not reduced the money which we are saving by the court fee transactions that were discussed during the period of Senator Chambers' amendment. The purpose of this amendment is to restore the funding for early childhood education programs from a 10 percent cut to a 5 percent cut. The dollar amount involved is \$116,510 in each year of the biennium, or \$233,020 total. Although this would increase the spending over the appropriations level, it would restore the program to the Governor's proposed spending amount. The early childhood education programs were developed in the 1990s. It began with 10 initial programs and now has expanded to included 28 school districts throughout the entirety of the state. If there's time, I can read those. While the school districts that are in my district are involved, yes, they truly are, the 28 school districts are spread the length and breadth of the state of Nebraska. It's a program that has been identified as a budget priority at the local and national level because of its demonstrated long-term cost benefits. The type of early intervention programs funded from these monies show a return on investment of about seven dollars in long-term savings for each dollar spent. Participants in these programs have shown a reduced involvement with special education, retention in