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to a hopefully more effective and a less costly approach to dealing with nonviolent offenders, especially those guilty of drug abuse and drug-related crimes. Thank you, Senator Brashear. Senator Raikes offered a restructuring of need-based scholarship aid, along with an increase in overall funding to help ensure access for low-income Nebraskans to our state's public and private colleges and universities. Thank you, Senator Raikes. And this week I personally signed four especially positive bills for rural Nebraska. One achieves our common objective for a new beginning with rural development efforts. Thank you, Senator Bromm and Stuhr and Chambers. Another appropriates much needed funding to help fight the terrible grasshopper infestations that threaten our ag resources. Thank you, Senator Wehrbein. The third provides a new tool to help promote job creation in 82 of our most rural counties. Thank you, Senator Landis. And the leadership of Senator Bromm helped to develop and give to the Nebraska Department of Agriculture the ability to designate livestock-friendly counties. Thank you, Senator Bromm. Farming and ranching and value-added agriculture are the backbone of our state's economy, and I believe each of these members will have a positive impact. Many more senators and legislative bills deserve recognition because all of you, in your own way, have contributed to the unheralded, yet very important, work of this session. You've tackled a variety of difficult issues throughout the past five months and on behalf of your state I say thank you. Until we meet again, I wish you the very best. Good luck. Godspeed. Thank you. (Applause)

SPEAKER BROMM: Thank you, Governor. The committee will now escort the Governor from the Chamber.

SENATOR CUDABACK PRESIDING

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Bromm, you're recognized.

SPEAKER BROMM: Thank you, Mr. President. At this time, I think it would be very appropriate to offer some thanks to many staff members that have absolutely made this session possible to run and to be completed. We have approximately 250 employees in the Legislative Council and they all have various roles and perform