

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

March 9, 2004

LB 868

SENATOR RAIKES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members. Senator Chambers, let me try to address your questions. But first, if I might make a point. Senator Wehrbein I think mentioned that the main change here was to move the date at which you needed to be five years old from October 15 back to September 1. And that is certainly an important change. But there's another one that I need to emphasize, which is actually more important in terms of narrowing the range of ages for the kindergarten class, and that is this. The rule is that if you are six by January 1, then you need to attend kindergarten that August. Okay? So for example, in the middle block on that top chart, would represent that top line. That particular child would be seven for five months of the kindergarten year, as depicted there. Now let me make clear one other thing, is that schools are required to offer kindergarten, but a child is not required to attend kindergarten, or a parent is not required to send their child to kindergarten. So these rules are permissive, in the sense that you don't have to send your child to school by the time they're six years of age. It's only if you want to...them to attend kindergarten, do you need to do that. So I think that's an important distinction. The upper limit, as far as a seven-year-old, is pretty much in place. In response to Senator Chambers, I would point out that, again, unabashedly, part of the objective here is to narrow the range of ages, the breadth, if we will, of the age range of those in kindergarten. But most of the change--in fact...well, I can't calculate which percentage, I'll have to...there's only...most of the narrowing occurs by reducing the number of older students in kindergarten. We're reducing the number of six- and seven-year-olds, without really...well, we are reducing by six weeks, I guess, the birth date of those who would be five years old, on the younger end, if you will. Most of the lowering, or most of the reducing of the range, is on the upper end. So with that, Senator Chambers, if you have a question or comment, I would yield to you.

SPEAKER BRÖMM: Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, since somebody cut me off, in case everybody didn't hear what I said, the football team wanted to take the field, but the marching band refused to yield, the day the music died. But the lines I like best are, the three