

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

March 9, 2004

LB 868

requirements from the federal level, in additional to our own testing requirements at the state level, I just worry about what we're doing. And I'm not saying I don't want to support your bill, because I do.

SENATOR JANSSEN: Time.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: But we always have to be careful what we wish for.

SENATOR JANSSEN: Senator Brown, your light is on next.

SENATOR BROWN: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, this is true confessions, I guess. I never went to kindergarten. We were moving, and I never got the chance. But my brother got to go to kindergarten, and he took naps in school, and I thought that was quite a treat that I missed out on. The question that is posed to us is quite difficult, because Senator Stuhr has made the case about the children that are held back by their parents for athletic reasons or other kinds of performance reasons, and then those kids are in class with younger children, much younger children, who may not be able to comprehend quite at the same developmental level as the older children. And then school becomes for them an experience that is not successful. On the other hand, if we don't allow these younger children the opportunity to go to school, most of them are not probably going to have the opportunity for the high-quality early childhood experiences that might make a difference for them. And so you know, for many of these children, school is the place that they're going to get...if they're going to get the enrichment activities, it's going to be at school. Unfortunately, we can't rely on those early childhood experiences in the home being enriching for many children. And so we are trying to do kind of a hole in the finger in the dike, and not addressing some of the other problems which have to with, do we have adequate early childhood experiences for those children whose families cannot afford to have them...I mean, who cannot afford not to be working, and so the kids have to be in some sort of a care arrangement. They probably have to have their children start school whenever it's available, because they cannot afford to continue to pay for the childcare arrangement, and there just is