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March 10, 2004 LB 868

SENATOR CUDABACK: Time.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: I care about those children.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Time, Senator.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: So it's up to Senator...oh, you said time?

SENATOR CUDABACK: I did, Senator.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you. (Visitors introduced.) On with discussion of AM2960, Senator Stuhr.

SENATOR STUHR: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. I just want to go back with some history on why this bill was introduced. And the bill, as originally introduced, was to move the entrance of kindergarten back to August 1, and this was after receiving numerous, I would say tens and tens of letters from teachers and also principals who felt that we wanted to look at the age of range in kindergarten and attempt to narrow that gap. I have a letter from one of the teachers that I'd like to share with you: The different level of abilities that come into kindergarten from just basic life experience, the ability level is further apart when there are young kindergarteners. There is such a difference in the development of a seven-year-old as opposed to a four-year-old. And I like this because she says kindergarteners are like corn. Corn will mature and grow at its own rate. It will mature when it is ready. You cannot force it to mature early. That is how I feel about young kindergarteners in my room. Well, after discussion with a number of schools, we did make a compromise, and we moved that date up to September 1. We also lengthened, and this is a local school policy, that school boards can admit children then from September 1, who are...who will be five between September 1 and December 31. And there were three different areas if a child...a parent could bring an affidavit saying that if a child is moving to another district, if they are coming from another district, or if they have demonstrated capability through an assessment. Also in this amendment we are talking