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FLOOR DEBATE

March 19, 2004      LB 1091

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN: Time has expired.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Raikes would move to amend the committee amendment with AM3232. (Legislative Journal page 1154.)

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN: Chair would recognize Senator Raikes.

SENATOR RAIKES: Thank you, Mr. President and members. Hopefully, this provides an avenue to continue the discussion, which was ongoing, and I think that's a good discussion. This amendment would say that instead of \$4 million being transferred from the Education Innovation Fund on line 17 on page 7 of the fiscal status, if you're looking, that would be only \$3 million transferred each year. And again, let me back up, if I might, in response to Senator Chambers. The total amount of the education lottery money is about \$8 million per year, plus. Last year, the Legislature made the decision to use \$4 million of that to help support the Nebraska Scholarship Act, which provides need-based aid to students. So there is basically...that would...that amount, that \$4 million, would continue to be used for that purpose, leaving \$4 million for other purposes, and that is...the committee's proposal is to use that \$4 million available for other purposes to go to the General Fund. What I'm suggesting with this amendment is that we only use \$3 million of the remaining funds to go to the General Fund, and what I have in mind for the remaining \$1 million would be to fund reorganization incentives for K-12 schools. This reorganization incentive proposal was a part of the Education Committee's interim work. The committee came to the conclusion that if you want to achieve efficiencies among particularly smaller K-12 schools, it makes good sense to see to it that mergers and consolidations occur. Those activities are expensive initially, even though long-run benefits occur in terms of cost savings. So it just makes good fiscal sense, I think the committee believed, to go ahead and provide the school