

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

March 22, 2004 LB 1093

Senator Jones seemed to be approaching a position where he would be more favorable toward reconsidering and perhaps adopting the amendment. I hope that Senator Wehrbein's motion will be successful. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Senator Smith, the reconsideration motion.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Mr. President and members. Looking back over the handful of years that I've been here and the priority that K-12 education has been, and I still think that it is, I try to look at the big picture and what's happening, whether it's education, K-16, including the university, and actually beyond 16 years of education there, but try to look at the big picture, the tax burden, input from constituents, citizens across Nebraska when I make my decisions. And I have to say that I appreciate Senator Beutler's earlier discussion in saying it's not about the children at this point that Senator Wehrbein suggested. And I hope that we can refrain from the rhetoric and such as that, but it's actually quite early in the budget discussion. And it causes me a fair bit of concern when we know or at least evidence would show that state aid dollars to schools are spent a little more freely than locally generated property tax dollars. And I'd pose the question of, why? And I could probably answer that. But have we looked into that situation where the situation is that it is easier, but for what reasons, other than the constituent feedback? Do we need some other safeguards in the state aid formula or situation in general? But it seems to me that so many arguments made on education dollars on both sides of the equation, we hear about class size. We hear about teachers' salaries. We hear about old school buildings or overcrowded buildings. We hear about square footage for students, whether it's a new building or an old building. I know in my own district, my own school district in which I reside, some kids are in old school buildings and some kids are not, and there's equity issues there that have been discussed. But I have to say, and I'll probably take some heat for saying this, that I think all too often the expense of administration is left out of the discussion, in the number of administrators that are added, and the salaries. It's interesting, and I don't remember the exact numbers, but with