

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

March 23, 2004      LB 1048, 1093

current arrangement. Third, equity provisions...equity in provision of educational services would be improved. Compensation of Class I school teachers would be improved, and they are currently by far the lowest-paid group of teachers in Nebraska. And educational opportunities available to students would be provided in a more evenhanded fashion. Fourth, the quality of education would be positively impacted. Curriculum coordination would be improved, and higher teacher salaries offer a better opportunity to attract and retain the best teachers. And finally, there would be an opportunity to redirect public money to achieve a more efficient structure, or to improve equity, or both. Locally elected K-12 school boards would be given additional authority to manage school district resources. It is their job to balance the wants and needs of parents and students with those of taxpayers, to include the number and location of attendance centers. This proposal gives them the authority to do that job. Our discussion on LB 1093 only emphasizes the need for this measure. We are by necessity transferring more of the financial burden of our public K-12 schools to locally elected school boards and property tax payers. It is prudent, not to mention fair, to allow school boards the flexibility to respond to this situation.

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR RAIKES: This proposal is not something the committee has tried to slip past anyone. The proposal was formed in an Exec Session well before the beginning of this legislative session. The committee conducted three interim hearings across the state, one in Mullen, one in Broken Bow, and one in Wahoo. Finally, the bill was introduced and afforded a hearing, and we have tried to be very public in our modifications since the public hearing. This is not an easy step. It's clearly controversial. But in my view, this is a step that makes sense now. I want to commend the Education Committee for their willingness not only to do the hard work to...required to bring this proposal to you, but for their courage in doing so. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Raikes. You've heard the opening on LB 1048. As stated by the Clerk, there are committee