

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

April 5, 2004

LB 391

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature, this provision is that part of the bill that deals with child support, and my basic underlying position is that child support, insofar as it supplies an underlying financial basis for the child to proceed with their education, that not only should it not be reduced from age 19 to 18, but it probably should be increased. And what I mean by that is basically this. Back at the beginning of the last century, we decided that all kids should go to grade school, and kids at that age were naturally at home so they were supported in that educational effort. Then at a later point in time, basically we have been in the process, and now essentially we require kids to get through high school, or at least get to the near...near to the end of high school, and we're taking stronger measures in that regard now. But the world of the future, and I suggest to you the very near future, what's going to be good for those children and what's going to be good for this country is if we take...and I think it's almost imperative that we take the educational effort, the effort to educate our children, to yet another higher level. That's the world we're going to be living in, the world that's globalized, the world that values intellectual capital, as we discussed a few days ago. So if that's the world that we need to bring about, then another attitude that we need to encourage is that parents indeed should be supporting their children to some extent in the process of higher education. What this amendment says is that with respect to children who are going to school, that the age would not revert back to 18 for child support but rather, first of all, if they continued to be in high school the child support would continue for so long as they're in high school. And then it goes on to say for the next two years, age 19 and age 20, that the child support will continue for two years at a rate not any greater than what was being paid previously so long as the child is a full-time student in a postsecondary education institution. Right now, there are several things going on that actually discourage children from making that jump into higher education, even though ironically this is the time when, as a society, we need to encourage them to do that more than ever. Tuition rates have been going up dramatically. Student debt load has been going up dramatically. More and more kids are looking at that and delaying their