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SENATOR FISCHER: ...resident students per grade, could be closed. The people in this state, last fall, a year and a half ago, attended three hearings on LB 1048. I attended two of those hearings. The citizens of this state, last year and this year, and the members of this body, were told that this is not a consolidation bill. And yet we see from the fiscal note that the only savings--which, I may add, I do not feel are coming from the state level, but at the local level--make it a consolidation issue. I find the changes in that note disturbing, and I believe that this fiscal note plainly states what the intention of this bill is.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Time. Thank you, Senator Fischer. Senator Hudkins, followed by Senator Baker.

SENATOR HUDKINS: Thank you, Mr. President and members. I started, the last time I spoke, talking about the four things that are important to Nebraskans, the first being education. That probably is the most important thing to our citizens, because the leaders of our state, and in fact the nation, are probably somewhere between kindergarten and 12th grade right now. It's important that these kids get the education that they need and that their parent assume that they need, or that they think that they need. And that could be Class I's, it could be K-12's, it could be private schools, it could be parochial schools. But the parents have made that choice for their children. The second thing that is important to Nebraskans is economic development. We've talked about this kind of around the edges, how closing a school is going to affect the community. And it does. There was a consolidation--oh, gosh, it's been 30-plus years ago. Raymond Central used to be Valparaiso, Raymond, Ceresco, and Davey. They did go together for the junior high and high school. But it definitely affected Raymond. It definitely affected Davy. The other two aren't quite so bad off, but they had other industries and other businesses to take up the slack. Efficiency in government. We have seen the figures about how much it costs to educate a student. The state average in Nebraska, if you consider the average daily attendance, it costs \$7,896.52. We'll round that up to \$7,900. Let's just pick out a few schools. I just happen to have Lancaster County here. Remember now, the average per