

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

February 14, 2005 LB 126

the survival of many smaller K-12 districts serving rural Nebraska and often located in rural districts, as well as rural communities. Declining enrollments have left many with extra elementary capacity. They are struggling to survive financially. Adding to this difficulty is their inability to more efficiently use elementary space, because they can do so only with the permission of Class I boards. If these K-12 boards are allowed to make decisions about building needs, the probability of survival of not only the K-12 school but the broader rural community it serves is enhanced. The quality issue has been raised. So far as I know, no proponent of LB 126 is suggesting that kids can't learn in a Class I school. If you have the budget per pupil, the demographic characteristics of the typical students, and typically good parenting, why wouldn't you expect academic progress? If there is a quality issue, it seems to be the argument by opponents of LB 126 that kids can't learn in a K-12 school. If this is the argument, and I certainly don't buy it, we have got a huge problem because almost 98 percent of the kids...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR RAIKES: ...in the state go to K-12 schools. If there are issues to be addressed in K-12 schools, it is all the more reason that we join both citizen and financial resources to address them. We shouldn't allow parents to opt out of helping to deal with educational issues, and we shouldn't allow Class I boards to have a veto power over the use of taxpayer funds to address broader public education issues. Again, I urge your defeat of the McDonald amendment and support of LB 126. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Raikes. Senator Engel, on AM0086.

SENATOR ENGEL: Yield my time to Senator Raikes.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Raikes, you have almost five minutes.

SENATOR RAIKES: Thank you, Mr. President and members, and thank you, Senator Engel. The opponents of LB 126 argue that Class I