

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

February 14, 2005 LB 126

restricting local control, because there is nothing in the bill that guarantees that there will be closure. It's not about option enrollment. Option enrollment will continue to exist. It's not about economic development. That is a system that I strongly support, and I support it for all areas of the state, but it's a different system than the one we're talking about right now. We're talking about educating children right now. It's not about special education. There are a number of people, and I think if we look at option, we will find that a number of people who have children with special needs do opt for smaller schools, and that will continue to be their choice. And it's not about rural schools, because we are talking about schools that...not being affected, that are over ten miles away. So I haven't heard good enough arguments against the idea that we have an obligation to make the decision on what is the best economic principles for the state and for the locality. And so I will make my decision on how I think that what our obligations for a state system, a statewide system are, and not on guilt about some of these other issues. And I would yield the rest of my time to Senator Raikes, if he would like it.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Raikes, about 1, 35.

SENATOR RAIKES: Thank you, Senator Brown, Mr. President, members of the Legislature. I will just make one comment or two on the amendment before us, the one offered by Senator McDonald. Again, keep in mind, what is being changed here or offered here is to allow option students to be considered in the number of students that are required for protection under the provisions in the bill. I'll try to explain to you why I think that is a bad idea.

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR RAIKES: Whether it's a Class I or a K-12 or any other kind of school district, the primary focus should be on serving resident students. That has to be main focus, that should be the main focus, and that ought to be where the incentives are. If you do something like Senator McDonald is suggesting, you put schools into a recruiting contest with other schools. So you find an expansion of this business of putting ads in the paper