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FLOOR DEBATE

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can...the boards can form, they can eliminate a Class I school district if they seem the time is right. So I'm going to continue to listen to the debate. I don't know whether we should have legislation, you know, to be for the whole state just because we have possibly a couple of bad actors. So with that, I'm going to return the balance of my time to the Chair. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Stuthman. On with discussion. Senator Hudkins, followed by Senator Foley.

SENATOR HUDKINS: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. We talked a day or so ago about some of the statements that were made concerning LB 126 in the public hearing, and then some of those were repeated in the introductory remarks. I'll refresh your memory on statement number two--and we have 20--some that we would like to address, if there's time: The time has come for us to move to a K-12 organization of school districts in Nebraska; there are several reasons. And then that brings us to statement number three: This is especially the case when these units, 230 separate local government units, serve very few students, and provide the service at a cost per student that, on the average, is higher than in K-12 districts, and in some cases, astronomically higher. Well, now, while the percentage of students served by Class I is a relatively small minority in relation to the total Nebraska students, nonetheless, a total of 8,317 students attended Class I schools in 2003-04. Are you going to take their choice, their school, away? They have made that choice. They have gone from their K-12 to an option school, to a Class I. They did that for reasons that we don't know about. They could be convenience reasons. They could be the fact that there's no bullying in the K...in the Class I. It could be the fact that they get a more hands-on education. There are many, many reasons. We should not be sitting down here and dictating the future for the entire state, those children in the entire state. The statewide per pupil cost average--and this is figured on the average daily membership for 2002-2003--for all Nebraska students is \$7,476. Now, that takes into account some of the ones Senator Raikes told us about that cost \$11,000. This...I hate averages. Do you know what the average temperature in Nebraska is? It's 50; it's 100 in the