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Heidemann, and six others. Senator Foley.

SENATOR FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. President and members. We've been on this bill a number of days now. I've been listening carefully to the arguments of both sides, but I haven't yet weighed in. And I sense that we may be getting close to a vote of some kind here. And before we get to that point, I just want to put myself on record with a few thoughts on what I've learned in considering this bill. First, I want to thank Senator Raikes for bringing the bill. I know it's been difficult to carry a bill this controversial. I've received quite a number of e-mails and other communications, including quite a number of phone calls to my home, on this bill. This bill has really stoked the passions of a lot of Nebraskans. And I know that Senator Raikes has taken some personal abuse over his carrying of the bill. And I think it's great that he's brought the bill. I'm glad he's got us talking about this, because it is a problem that we need to address. So I thank him for doing it. The other day, Senator Hudkins was asking me, rhetorically, how would I feel if the school that my children attend, which happens to be a parochial school, were forced to merge in and close and consolidate or whatever, with some neighboring school. And obviously, I wouldn't be very pleased about that. But yet, that is precisely what has happened in other parts of the country with parochial schools. As they've lost attendance and the cost per student got too high, they were forced into a position where they had to consolidate with other schools. I'd also mention that I've done some research on this, and the school that my children attend, which is a parochial school, as I mentioned, educates about 500 students at a cost of \$3,100 per student. And let me tell you, those kids are getting a darn good education. I'm just thrilled that my kids are in that school. It's costing \$3,100 per year to educate those kids. And I know the parochial-public school debate is not an apples-to-apples comparison. There's some differences there in terms of salary structure and benefits and so forth, and the special needs students, and all those kinds of considerations. But I do get concerned when I look through the materials that Senator Raikes and others have provided to us, and I scan through this list of Class I schools, and to my amazement--and I've never served on the Education Committee, so I've never had