

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

April 5, 2005

LB 689

SENATOR D. PEDERSON: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the Legislature. This is a very, very difficult issue. You know, after the Legislature adjourns each day, the Appropriations Committee goes down to room whatever it is, a cave I think, and we sit there for an hour and a half or so and try to figure out how to spend \$100,000, \$20,000 at a time, and what's in the best interests of the state. And here on the 56th day of the Legislature, after doing all of this, now we say, well, and there's this little thing about 10, 10, \$10 million for the next three consecutive years, and maybe we could get by with \$8 million because we don't really know what it is we're going to need. Now that's a very difficult position to put us in, and I would say that candidly we don't have \$8 million to put into this program at this time. So I think what Senator Beutler is talking about is perhaps the best that we can do. I really am ill at ease suggesting that we go in and start spending an indeterminate amount of money on something that we really don't know what the total cost would be, assuming that we have the dollars. That's just not a good way to spend money of the state of Nebraska. So I'm not sure exactly what we're going to do. I think we're going to have to talk through this but, in some way, I would say that we cannot spend 8 million additional dollars this year on the education program. That's just flat it. We just don't have those dollars. And this is a very desirable program. I sure wish that we had known, and various users of this system certainly should have been advising us that these contracts were going to run out, and we should be doing something, perhaps we could revise a number of the things that we've been doing. But this is certainly a late date in which to come in and say, now, we'll just spend...oh, we'll set aside \$8 million, like we had \$8 million to set aside. We don't have it. We'll listen and see what can be worked out. Hopefully, something can be worked out to where we look into the program and see what can be done. And I don't understand exactly the way this is, that it sounds like all of it is going to fall apart and we're going to have to start over again, so I don't see what we're losing, frankly, if we wait. But be that as it may, that's my feeling at this time. I don't see how we can do this. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Pederson. Senator Jensen,