

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

May 5, 2005

LB 425

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Engel. On with discussion, Senator Foley, followed by Senator Kruse.

SENATOR FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. President and members. I may be mistaken on this, but I think there is a history behind this program and some court rulings on this program. And again, I may be mistaken, but it's my understanding that it was former Governor Crosby who, as a private attorney, litigated this matter, and the courts found that he was correct, his arguments were persuasive, and that the program is fully constitutional. This program has been around for years and years and years. Look, I pay property taxes to support the public schools, and I pay tuition as well to send my kids to parochial school. That's my choice. And for every other parent who, like me, sends their kids to parochial schools and pays property taxes to support the public schools, all we get from this program is a loan of books. And what books get loaned to us? Not books on religion. It's the very same books that are used in the public schools. They buy more of the books and they loan them to the parents of the kid, to send their kids to parochial school. The parents have to fill out paperwork in order to qualify for the loan of the book, just like checking a book out of the library. They use the book for the school year and the book gets returned. What's the big deal? But there are parochial schools in the state who are hanging on by a shoestring. If you start pulling away some of these kinds of benefits, and it is a benefit for sure, what happens to those kids when those schools close down? Do the kids just vanish? No, they don't vanish. They go to public schools, and the public schools have to absorb those thousands of kids. And there goes property taxes again. I urge you to vote no on AM1431. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Foley. Senator Kruse, on AM1431.

SENATOR KRUSE: Mr. President and members, thank you. I will be very quick and simple. I oppose the motion, although I do understand it. There are very few ways that we can join our parochial education partners in the communities which are across the state, and this is one way we can do it. It is an appropriate way. They help to pay for the textbooks, the