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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 126

General File from supporters of LB 126. As Senator Louden said, this amendment does offer some concessions to the people who support LB 126. But there's one concession we couldn't make, and that is recognizing the quality education that Class I districts provide, and the importance of those Class I districts in many areas of Nebraska. And so under this amendment, Class I districts are allowed to continue to exist as political subdivisions, as they have for many, many years here in the state. There are some requirements, though. The Class I districts would need to address the concerns that were expressed in regards to accountability. In that regard, in this amendment you will see that Class I districts, in order to meet that requirement, will take a three-year average of the student assessments, their scores. And if they can meet the K-12 district's assessment scores or be above the K-12 district's assessment scores, they are allowed to remain open. In regards to the efficiency question that was brought up during General File debate, our proposal is, in this amendment, that if a Class I district with a three-year average cost per pupil, if that is equal to the K-12 district or below the K-12 district's cost per pupil, that Class I district will be allowed to remain open. In regard to enrollment, if the Class I district has two...an average of two students per grade enrolled, that Class I district will be allowed to remain open. In regard to the argument on the necessity for Class I districts to be out there, or if they're supposedly out there as some type of haven, in one form or another, our proposal is that that Class I district, if it is at least four miles from another elementary district, on a reasonably maintained public highway, that Class I district will be allowed to remain open. We also have a proposal in here in regards to state aid. I personally believe that there isn't much accountability from school districts when they receive their state aid check from the Department of Education. Senator Louden, I thought, had a wonderful idea on how we can get more accountability from school districts when they receive that check. As most of you know, in the state aid formula, districts receive money based on need. That need is determined by a number of factors. And some of those address specific problems or challenges the students face. In this proposal, that is addressed. If a school district, K-12, Class I, whatever, is receiving state aid because they meet the