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LB 126

recognized to close on AM1217 to LB 126.

SENATOR LOUDEN: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. As we listened to some of the discussion, we don't hear that much about educating children, or local control on schools, or what people are doing in their own area. It talks about governance. We want to have a school board system, a K-12 school board system. We've had that in Class VI school districts for years. Worked fine. LB 126 does completely away with any Class I-Class VI districts. Sure, you call them Class I's in a Class VI district. You could probably name that district...call it a Class VII with community schools, or something like that. Maybe that would make some folks look the other way, or decide that it was something different. But a Class VI district is a K-12 district. And there are many, many of the area out in western Nebraska that's covered by that type of school system. We have whole counties, at times, that are Class VI districts--naming Grant, Sioux, and a goodly portion of Sheridan County, for one, and also Cherry County, is mostly all Class VI districts. That probably takes in over a third of the surface area of the state of Nebraska. So remember, when you're voting in on LB 126, you've just sunk that all down the tube, and that will be the end of that. Some of the other provisions in there that I think are something that needs to be considered in AM1217 would be the accountability with the state aid. Up until now, we've been spending fortunes in state aid, and nobody has really ever tracked that money to see where it's going or where it...if the students that are entitled to it are receiving it. Once the state aid goes into a school district fund, then it can be used more or less however they see fit in their budget. It isn't tracked accordingly. If there's language deficiency for students, do those students receive it? If there's a poverty level and a certain school system is entitled to that type of substitution, do they have that? No, it...there's no way that any of that is tracked. That was part of the amendment LB...AM1217 would cover. Also, in some of it, it was...whether you would...you're going to have a local system for your schools. When you go with LB 126 and as the way it's being structured now, you're going with K-12 systems. Whenever you increase the size of your system, or you're going with consolidation, are you actually increasing the amount of money