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LB 126

think that's a lot to ask. In fact, I think it is very reasonable and well-intended. So as we vote on LB 126 today, I hope you have the future in mind. So many times the debate on Class I schools is talking about the past, and I only talk about the past as proof for the future, as proof that...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR SMITH: ...quality exists in Class I schools, and we need to leverage that for the future. We need to leverage that community support, not discourage it. But as we cast our vote on LB 126, keep the future in mind. I predict that you will regret a green vote on LB 126, and it's not because of unhappy people with kids in Class I schools today. It's about the long-term impact on quality. We need more Class I schools across Nebraska, not fewer. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Smith. Senator Heidemann.

SENATOR HEIDEMANN: Senator Cudaback, fellow members, last January I signed on to help the people that were opposing LB 126, and why did I sign on? I mean, there were people that were talking about we need to do this because of local control. I believe that's an important issue. I think that these districts should have been able to decide on their own whether to merge or be assimilated into a higher class school system than the Class I's. I believe that's important, local control. So I think the schools in these smaller communities are control--I do believe that--in these small communities are important. And I believe that it's important to have a school in a community; otherwise, it's the starting process of that community dying. Some people believe that schools are tied to economic development. I believe that, too; that if you have a school, you're more likely to have a better economy in the area, better economic development. But why did I sign on? I signed on for the 8,000 kids in these Class I schools, these 231 class schools. And I will agree with Senator Redfield that I believe that we have quality education in this state, but I also want to tell her that these Class I's had a purpose; that there were kids that not only wanted to go to these Class I's, but there were some kids that needed to go to these Class I's because they