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LB 577

that Nebraska ranks 34th in the nation for its investment in early...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: ...childhood services, behind both Kansas and Missouri. We are also one of the highest-ranked states of working mothers, and we have a growing population of new citizens who need support in learning of the English language. Early childhood education is particularly beneficial to at-risk students from backgrounds in poverty, who often struggle in academics early on, and thus continue to lag behind their peers throughout their education in the school system. I do believe that LB 577 is common sense, and it is a sound investment in the state system. And by the way, I do support the amendment to the amendment. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Schimek. Further discussion. Senator Fischer.

SENATOR FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. President and members. I support early childhood education. We all know the benefits that the state and our children receive from that. But I do have quite a few questions on this bill and on the amendment, if Senator Raikes would yield to questions.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Raikes.

SENATOR RAIKES: Yes.

SENATOR FISCHER: Right now, Senator Raikes, do the grant monies come from the General Fund? Is that what I'm seeing here on the fiscal note?

SENATOR RAIKES: Yes.

SENATOR FISCHER: In the current grant money that districts are able to receive because they have programs in place, do you know what the figure is for this year on that money?

SENATOR RAIKES: It's about \$2 million. There's \$2 million