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LB 645

even at the beginning of the session, when LB 645 was introduced. But I believe that this compromise reflects a give and take from both sides and, as we all know, that is oftentimes necessary here in the body. And I think it's imperative that we do what we can to encourage the private investment, and that is being able to offer these providers at least some sort of return on their investment, knowing that they can compete consistently and fairly on a level playing field and otherwise, so that they can recoup their investment and hopefully even bring more dollars into Nebraska to expand on their infrastructure. Because as things change so very rapidly, I truly believe that it is...it is the private companies who best apply technology, expand it, and move it to the far reaches of the state, and everyone benefits at that point. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Smith. Senator Engel, followed by Senator Janssen, on AM1351 to the Transportation Committee amendments to LB 645.

SENATOR ENGEL: Mr. President, members of the body, I support the Transportation Committee amendment. I believe this has been a long time coming, this compromise, because this has been quite controversial from the beginning, even from the referencing part of it. So I do support this compromise. I think they spent a lot of time working together here, and then with this study, they'll...they've got this next year to figure out what will work for the best interests of the people of the state of Nebraska. I've always drawn that line, private versus public. I don't think public and private...there shouldn't be any competition. A lot of times there's cooperation, but there shouldn't be any competition between public and private, because I don't think it's a fair playing field. I do also want to mention that in Nebraska our public power is, of course, the only one in the country, and it's very, very efficient. We have the best service of any utilities in the country, and we have the best rating structures of anybody in the country, so I do not want to lose that. And I'm concerned if we let the private go over into the public sector...over into the public sector then I'm concerned that there be a more concerted drive to privatize our public power. There have been drives in the past to do that, and internally here and outside the Chambers, and I