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LB 126

The Class I advocates would have you believe that 97 percent of our students are attending inadequate schools and that their indifferent parents could care less about their educational success. In K-12 districts the parents may not be painting the building, but they are working with their children on their homework, attending the band concerts, volunteering in the classrooms, fund-raising for playground equipment and computers, organizing teacher appreciation celebrations, going to book fairs and spelling bees, and communicating with the teachers who share a devotion to the students' success. If I believe that the passage of LB 126 would compromise the quality of education that the students across Nebraska receive, I would not have introduced the proposal. The goal of LB 126 is not to close small schools to the detriment of rural communities and at the expense of their children's education. It is repeatedly about simplification of the organization of schools in Nebraska. LB 126 reduces the total number of school districts and school district governing boards in the state from 488 to 257. The Governor is correct in stating that this issue does evoke strong emotions, emotions that often cloud people's perspective. Our job is to stand back and look at the situation objectively and do what is right for the state as a whole. LB 126 would allow local people to control local resources for the benefit of local children. This is the right thing to do for our state. Please join me in maintaining our stature as the policymaking branch that is charged by our constitution to provide for the education of our children. Please join me in adopting LB 126, notwithstanding the objections of the Governor. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: You've heard the opening on the motion, pass LB 126 notwithstanding the Governor's objections. Open for discussion. Senator Smith, followed by Senators Fischer, Heidemann, Erdman, Baker, and about eight others. Senator Smith.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Mr. President and members. I stand to not repeat myself with information that I've offered to the body numerous times before, but I do want to add some new information and certainly respond to Senator Raikes' assertions of inefficiency, lack of quality and otherwise in the Class I schools. I'm here today to tell you that 20-some Class I