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FLOOR DEBATE

March 14, 2006 LB 605A, 689, 1208

SENATOR CUDABACK: Back to discussion of advancement of LB 605A. Senator Thompson, there are no lights on. Senator Thompson waives closing. The question before the body is, shall LB 605A advance to E & R Initial? All in favor vote aye; opposed, nay. The question before the body is advancement of LB 605A. Have you all voted who care to? Please record, Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 34 ayes, 0 nays on the motion to advance the bill.

SENATOR CUDABACK: LB 605A does advance. We now move on to the next agenda item, LB 1208, Mr. Clerk, when you get time.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Mr. President, LB 1208, offered by Senator Raikes. (Read title.) The bill was read for the first time on January 18, referred to the Education Committee. That committee reports the bill to General File with committee amendments attached. (AM2565, Legislative Journal page 911.)

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Raikes, you're recognized to open on LB 1208.

SENATOR RAIKES: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the Legislature. If I may, let me background you a little bit on this issue. This is one that came to the Legislature last year. I believe the bill number was LB 689. The distance education framework that we use for K-12 schools in Nebraska is at somewhat of a watershed. Nebraska fortunately has a very good fiberoptic connection system among school districts in the state, but we have gotten to a point whereby the software that's used to communicate, or to use that fiberoptic capacity, is not up-to-date. And certainly that impacts not only the normal technological uses of technology by school systems, but also distance education. LB 689 was a proposal that began the address of this situation, and in fact, you may remember, required a set-aside of state funds of about \$30 million to address the issue and provide the updated equipment and so on. The Legislature at that point provided the committee some valuable information; namely, that it was not prepared to spend \$30 million on this particular problem, and so instead formed a task force to study the issue, come back with a recommendation