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FLOOR DEBATE

March 15, 2006 LB 690

time. This bill is about providing opportunities for students to acquire 21st-century skills. It's about keeping our best and our brightest students in the state. We have outstanding programs in math, science, and technology, and often our students are not aware of the opportunities that are available in our state. Today, schools need to form partnerships with other schools, and this will enable that to happen. I believe that every student needs opportunities to explore careers and prepare for higher education. They need to learn a variety of skills to be productive citizens. LB 690 recognizes these principles, and provides an opportunity for schools to work together to offer career education programs for their students. Thank you, and I would be happy to answer any questions. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Stuhr. You've heard the opening. As stated by the Clerk, there are committee amendments. As Chairman of the committee, Senator Raikes, you're recognized to open on the Education Committee amendments.

SENATOR RAIKES: Thank you, Mr. President and members. The...Senator Stuhr has an amendment filed to the committee amendments which basically replace the committee amendments. I'm going to support that amendment, and so I'm not going to spend a lot of time talking about the particular language in the committee amendment. I would like to offer some general background. Senator Stuhr, as you may know, has for a number of years been focused on career education and doing...offering various proposals to enhance that effort. I have not always been supportive of those, but I am very supportive of this one. The essence here is that a collaborative effort is required to provide this sort of educational opportunity to students. And to me, that's a real key. Over the years, the availability of career education or technical programs in high schools has dwindled, and the important reason is that these programs tend to be expensive, at least when compared with the more traditional academic programs that are offered in high school. So as schools came under financial pressure, the first things they had to eliminate were these kinds of programs. I'm not suggesting, and I think she is not, that we can go back to where we were at one time, and every school district offers a complete