## TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE Transcriber's Office FLOOR DEBATE

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there are some new members who have recently been elected. So anyway, I just want to give you the background of how this came There was a statewide task force. Senator Bohlke and I served on it, and I believe another Senator, but I can't remember who it was at this time. remember who it was at this time. But anyway, it included school administrators, teachers, general public, the business community, and they made a number of recommendations to the Legislature dealing with a variety of education issues. And a big concern was the fact that a lot of areas of the state were having extreme difficulty in getting teachers with specific teacher training areas, people who were teaching math who didn't really have the credentials to do that. And so in order to improve our education system, they felt it would be helpful, particularly in the rural areas, if we had ways to help get the teachers attracted to those areas in subject areas and shortage areas and poverty areas of the state. And this piece of legislation was developed by a wide variety of folks and, when it passed, was supported by the Nebraska School Administrators, the Nebraska Association of School Boards, the Nebraska State Education Association, University of Nebraska, and Creighton University. And that's how it came to be. What this amendment is, is...and what happened over the years, because of the budget crisis, was we found many ways to keep it funded and keep it going. To let you know where this particular program is, the Department of Education has developed the rules and regulations, they've had the hearings, they've had all of the things done. They've met with the teacher training institutions. All of this is ready to be implemented this fall. There are students who can apply for it, and they would get the scholarships this fall. This bill got introduced and basically took funding...unhitches that funding that was already set to go into place this fall. So what Senator Raikes and I did was sit down and figure out a way to get both done, not throw this program out that's been in statute. And the Legislature, in three different sessions, found three different ways to fund it. it's been around a long time. This was the year that the students were going to be able to take advantage of this loan forgiveness program, which keeps good teachers in the state. There's a grade point average. They have to be accepted to the teacher training institution in the education degree. There are lots of things in the original bill. This is the funding