

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
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March 28, 2006 LB 898

Committee. Have you all voted who care to? Record please, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 31 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President, on the adoption of committee amendments.

SENATOR CUDABACK: The committee amendments have been adopted.

CLERK: I have nothing further on the bill, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Back to discussion of advancement of LB 898. Senator Pahls.

SENATOR PAHLS: Mr. President, members of the body, I think a lot of times we need to put a face on the issue, and it needs to be something dramatic enough that a lot of us know about. Through the hearings, I did hear a number of people discuss certain issues about this particular law. A lot of times, they are lost in the discussion because the topic is...may not be that significant to a number of people. But today, I bring to you a topic that I think is significant to a number of people, and I will start by reading a section from the World-Herald on September 18. The Omaha School Board shocked Nebraska on June 6 by voting to immediately try to take over parts of the Millard, Ralston, and Elkhorn school districts. Despite its significance, the note...the vote came without public warning. There wasn't even debate that night amongst the Omaha School Board members. Now we need to set aside for now the bigger argument on the merits of the proposal. We should consider instead the abrupt way the argument got started. How did something so big win the unanimous blessing of 12 separately elected officials with no public warning or debate? The answer lies in how the Omaha Public Schools officials interpreted two Nebraska statutes that are intended to keep public business out in the open. The OPS officials said the state open meeting statutes allowed three discussions of the plan to be held in secret. They say the public statute allowed them to keep secret written records related to the formation of the plan. Those records remained secret despite the request for the release by the World-Herald. Continuing: Prior to June 6, board members discussed aspects of the takeover plan in three private meetings