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an oft repeated message. Senator Johnson was discussing it last night. We are not growing in Nebraska and we must grow. I'm fond of the phrase, which I think is true, grow or die. We are in a competition in Nebraska and we must compete or we lose. The price of competition is small compared to the price of failure. LB 1256 fits into a vision of doing things smarter than we have been. It will help us grow, it will help us compete, and it will provide a return many times over on the investment that we would make. At first glance, it might appear that this is a bill that we simply cannot afford, but I respectfully suggest that it should be clear that it is something we cannot afford not to afford. There is a unique confluence of events and circumstances that make this bill not only a possibility but a virtual reality with a wonderful result. First, there is our ongoing demographic challenge, which we have discussed over and over and over. We have a static population, de minimis, plus or minus--70 counties with no growth; 41 counties with more deaths than births. By 2030, Nebraska will have 200,000 more senior citizens than it has as we meet today. And among our youth, our young, the percentage at risk, that is, those from poverty, minority, immigrant, and single-parent households, has increased and will continue to increase. We have distributed a map that demonstrates the scope of the at-risk families, and that problem in our state. I think the picture is worth a thousand words. It shows the counties for which we're all responsible in which we have above-average numbers of Nebraska families at or below the poverty level. You will see that this is a Nebraska issue. This is a whole Nebraska issue. This is not an urban versus rural, or rural versus urban issue. This is an urban and a rural issue. To summarize, it is clear that in the very near future we will have a very hard time taking care of both our oldest and our youngest citizens. We may now have some money to invest, and it is time to invest, I respectfully suggest, in our youngest citizens. Second, we have a truly spectacular opportunity to make an investment with our funds that would produce a remarkable return. The opportunity has been presented by individuals in the private sector who want to make available up to \$20 million for the benefit of the state for the purposes of childhood education, early childhood education. This would provide an eventual 50 percent return on our investment because the state