

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

March 29, 2006 LB 239

attract more persons to Nebraska. If these sons and daughters of illegal immigrants are going to stay in Nebraska, and the odds are heavily weighted that they will, then it is to the advantage of all of our citizens that these students have the opportunity for higher education. The higher the education, the more income they will earn over a lifetime. The more income, the more they contribute to the economy in terms of taxes that they pay, Social Security that they pay, homes that they purchase, and goods that they buy. It is not good economics to keep these students down. In addition, the demographics tell us that these students are going to replace the baby boomers and others who will soon be leaving the work force.

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Forward-looking businesses, like Gallup, understand what these young people are going to do to our economy. Final question I'd like to try to answer: Why can't these students become citizens just like our ancestors did? Keep in mind that these students are not able to apply for citizenship until they are 18 years of age. Most are only 17, or have just turned 18 by the time they have graduated from high school, and the road to obtaining citizenship is often a long, arduous, discouraging, and sometimes expensive process. It can take many years to complete. Meanwhile, the clock is ticking on educational opportunities. Moreover, some students do not even realize that they are not citizens. We heard this in testimony. They didn't realize they weren't a citizen until they applied for college. It is also possible...

SENATOR CUDABACK: Time, Senator Schimek.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: ...that some people...some children were born in this country and are automatically citizens, whereas their older sibling...

SENATOR CUDABACK: Time, Senator Schimek.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: ...is an illegal, through no fault of their own.