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SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Schimek. You've heard the opening on LB 239. Those wishing to speak are Senators Synowiecki, Beutler, Preister, Smith, Aguilar, and seven others. Senator Synowiecki.

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: Thank you, Senator Cudaback. Thank you, Senator Schimek. I know this has been a long road for you. Congratulations on finally getting this bill to the floor. It's long overdue. And I just want to underscore a couple points, and that is that this is not an immigration issue or immigration law issue. There's...indeed, there's no question in my mind that the federal government has completely and entirely failed us in terms of the immigration policy. You know, if you view this from a sense of practical reality, these kids are here, they will stay here, and Immigration and Naturalization Service does not have the resources, and I would assert not an interest, in deporting kids that are law-abiding, productive, and have demonstrated a capacity to successfully attain a university education. Now I know back in my days at the old probation department, I had trouble getting convicted felons deported through INS. I can assure you they don't have an interest in these kids that are productive and have initiative relative to academics. Because of the failure of the federal government relative to immigration, we are then tasked, state legislators, to develop public policy that is fair and equitable and meets the needs of all of our kids in the state. You know, it's really, to me, it's a simple question: Do we want these kids participating in our economy at the university-educated level; or do we want these kids, again recognizing the practical reality behind this, do we want these kids participating in our economy at the GED level? It's really an economic question, as Senator Schimek referred to. Given the demographics of my district, I've had opportunity to meet personally with these kids that are impacted by our current policy and who are essentially locked out of a university-level education. As Senator Schimek indicated, our current policy essentially locks these kids out. And I can assure you these kids are quite articulate. They're academically very capable and can excel at our university system in enhancing their education prowess. You know, there are situations that I am intimately aware of, again, given the demographics of my particular district, where the