

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

March 29, 2006 LB 239

on to college, the least that we could do, I think, is to make it within their grasp, not to take away that opportunity by making it prohibitively expensive, but to at least allow it to be within their grasp. They're not going to qualify for any other kind of benefits. They're not going to qualify for Pell Grants or other aid. We can do something to at least make it within their grasp. The opportunity we can help to provide at no additional cost to the state and to no detriment of any other student. This will not prevent any other Nebraska student from going to the university. It will not take money away from those students. It doesn't harm anyone. It only provides an opportunity at a more reasonable, affordable rate for these students who are already having difficulties in being able to go. They've already had to excel and to academically make sure that they would be qualified. Let's not put such high impediments and burdens in front of them that they can't go to college at all. This simply allows them, and requires them to meet other requirements, including having at least lived in Nebraska long enough to have graduated from high school, to agree to apply for citizenship if they haven't already, and if they're 18 years old they, in some instances, would have already applied for citizenship. So they are seeking legal systems and means to be residents and would have to do that in order to qualify, so they're going down a road of legal process. They're seeking to better themselves. These are the young people that we want to educate and to stay in our state and to help contribute...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR PREISTER: ...that we have said earlier we want. For these preschool at-risk students, these young people are at risk of not even going to college if we set the economic requirements so high that they can never afford to go. I think we can help them. We can help them at no additional cost to the state, no additional impediment or requirement to any other in-state Nebraskan. It's, in my view, the right thing to do to help some very needy young people, and we're not even talking probably about a very large number of students, but an important number of students nonetheless. Thank you.