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FLOOR DEBATE

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I am a cosponsor of this bill and at the time that it was presented to me it sounded very fair. And I've had to correct a lot of misperceptions. I think people, in general, are getting the idea...they're mixing up what's happening on the federal level with what we're trying to do with LB 239. What we're trying to do with LB 239, and has been repeated here, is people that have intention, they have steps in place to become natural...they want to be naturalized citizens, and I understand. I said, what's an affidavit? Well, that's a legal document that says that they're going to be doing that. I'm very interested in what Senator Flood brought up. I had not heard that opinion, and this is just General File. I think we've got a lot of time to look at that and study that. And I've also responded to some people in my district with some questions that they've posed, too, on it. I was very interested in what the Gallup Organization had to say. They are known to study issues and trends and so forth, and I want to read some of the letter that the Gallup Organization has...had sent after studying this issue. It says: Many of our leaders at Gallup have been studying the pros and cons of LB 239. We are 100 percent for it. The core value of our support is not that it is the right thing for this community of people, or because it's the fair thing to do. Although we believe that all that's true, our support is really based on our future--the future of Nebraska, the next 100 years of state economics. We need to give immigrant families the best opportunity possible to educate qualified students. It's in the state's best interest, as much as it is in the students' best interests. These students represent valuable and much needed resources of this state. They're not charity cases. As long as they're taking the steps necessary for citizenship, these students should be given the same opportunity as other in-state students. Within this population is a new generation of entrepreneurs, inventors, super managers, and individual achievers of all kinds that will help keep Nebraska competitive. We are in a global competition for talent. We must be thinking of ways to develop it and not to hold it back. They present a future solution, not a current problem. Barring K-12 students from advancing to postsecondary educations with in-state tuition sets our state back. The predominantly Hispanic influx of talent into our state is and will be a big part of our future. They are here to stay and