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FLOOR DEBATE

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will be considered Nebraskans as much as you or I. That course is already set. We should value them and prepare them as we would our own children for what they will be a part of--our state's future generation of leadership. And we recently distributed, in another...on another bill, but this is cumulative estimates of population changes for counties of Nebraska and county rankings, and I was just looking at my district, in particular. Fillmore County, this is from 2000 to 2005, in just a five-year period went down nearly 4 percent--3.8 percent. Jefferson County decreased nearly 5 percent--4.9 percent. Thayer County went down over 10 percent in those five years--10.2 percent. Saline County went up 2.5 percent, and much of that was in the town of Crete, which then I believe in those years became a first-class city. We're talking about money for a Snowbird Trail. Who's going to be driving on the Snowbird Trail? We're not making new Nebraskans, folks. And that's my own district. I call my district a microcosm of the state of Nebraska, because it is. The western half of my district,...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR COMBS: ...very much declining population; eastern part, very much sort of like a suburb, in some ways, of the Lincoln area. And even...I deal with all...both those sets of values very much of the time. So we have an interesting district, but we got to deal with declining population. You know, I live in Fillmore County. I'm a Nebraskan. I'm going to be a Nebraskan the rest of my life. There's going to be a whole lot of other people 65 years of age and older. Nebraskans live longer than anybody else. Who's going to be here to take care of us, to pay the taxes, to support the increasing load we have? We want college educated Nebraska kids here. So just as that same opportunity is afforded to people who come here from out of state, we've got people who are taking steps to become citizens, who deserve in-state tuition so they do get educated here and they stay here. And like I said, I'm still listening. I'm still very interested in the points that Senator Flood made,...

SENATOR CUDABACK: Time, Senator Combs.