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

April 4, 2006 LB 1024

I'm not from Omaha; I'm from North Platte. But I attended Omaha Public School. I went to Benson High School, and actually, when I went to Benson High School, the house that I lived in when I started there was four doors from where Senator Bourne now lives, so I'm pretty familiar with that area, and I'm familiar with the Omaha Public School and have retained my familiarity. think that what's in the amendment, Senator Bourne, is a desirable thing, but I think you've made it a mandatory thing. You're saying, in addition to all other authorities, each council shall assure that every school building in every school district...and then you go on to say is racially and sociologically balanced. I'm concerned about that. That's a goal; that's fine. But to make it a mandatory determination, I think smacks in the face of reality. This goes back to the 1970s when we were having to bus students back and forth to achieve this goal, and you know what? The reason they guit doing that, in large measure was because the students didn't want to go away from their neighborhoods. Now when I went to Benson High School, there was only one black student in the high school, and now it's, I think, the most predominant group in Benson High School. But why is that? I think a lot of that has to do with neighborhood, a lot of it has to do with the changes in the neighborhood, and not to say anything about why you live there, but I think that the area has become more affordable to many people. And I think that...we talk about... I see these inflammatory notices that are put out. It talks about white flight from OPS. I don't know if it's white flight. I think that in many cases the reason that people have moved to Millard and other areas has to do with the fact that they're economically able to get a larger home in a different neighborhood. I don't think it's to avoid things, from what I've seen in Omaha. So I think that we have to differentiate between what's desirable and what's mandatory, and when we start requiring that each school in each district have this diverse personality of student body that you're referring to in here, I think that makes an unreasonable burden on any legislative bill. And I think that... I've never really quite understood what it is that Omaha wants out this. I see these words. I see these words of, we want to equalize with diversity and all that sort of thing. But I haven't heard how that's to be achieved. Are we to send students from one side of Omaha over to the other