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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 1024

SENATOR SCHIMEK: ...back to the committee amendment. Mr. Clerk, are there further amendments?

CLERK: There are. Senator Chambers would move to amend the committee amendments with AM3142. (Legislative Journal pages 1492-1494.)

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you. Senator Chambers, you're recognized to open on your amendment.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you. Madam President, members of the Legislature, I want to make it clear at the outset that I am very serious about this amendment. Several years ago I began discussing in my community the possibility of carving our area out of OPS and establishing a district over which we would have control so that when it came to the hiring of teachers, administrators, providing the basic equipment and supplies, and establishing the curriculum, we would have control over that. People have asked me, who became aware of my position, whether I'm saying it would be a district which would exclude white people. My intent is not to have an exclusionary system, but one which would probably be more inclusive than all others. But we, meaning black people, whose children make up the vast majority of the student population, would control. That does not happen as long as we are part of OPS. When you go to the poorer areas of the city, you will find minority group members and poor white children, all of whom are victimized by the current operation of the Omaha Public Schools System. When people have no say that is effective in the destiny of their children themselves or the education being provided for their children, there is a feeling of futility and hopelessness. When approaches are made to individual teachers and principals, parents are often treated rudely and dismissively. Going to the school board is even less helpful. So what this amendment would achieve, if it is adopted, is the creation of at least one district, but there would be more than one, which fits the pattern or model which I've discussed. It would become a model of what an education system should be, not only because I am well educated, self-educated basically, but I have degrees showing I went to white people's schools and got what they