

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

April 6, 2006

LB 1024

SENATOR HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. I rise to respectfully disagree with my learned colleague Senator Chambers. Segregation did not originate with Dr. Mackiel or John Lindsay. I grew up in Omaha. In the fifties, Omaha was very segregated. In the disadvantaged, if you would, area where I lived, you were considered rich if you had a bicycle as a child, and you were considered really rich if your family owned a small black and white television. And if you had kid skills, you'd make good friends with the children that lived in that family so you could watch television sometimes. When I look at this map, I see Omaha as it was in the fifties. You knew where every child lived by the color of their skin. I thank God that we've moved on from that. My children were born in the seventies and the eighties, and they were bused. Omaha was going through a transition at that time, and my children grew up in a much different Omaha than I grew up in. My children had friends of every color, good friends, and I think they are far better for that experience. I don't want to see us regress. I don't want us to see us...a community where people choose where they will live by what school is offered in that vicinity. I remember those days. Where you lived depended on the cost of the house, what you could afford, and then the area that you chose that house to be in, and there were very definite factors that you looked at. We've moved on from that. We're no longer an eight-inch, black and white television set. We're a big world, and our children are the better for it. I'm very grateful that my children went to schools with children of every color and every background. My children interact with everyone, without fear, without concern, and I think we owe this to all the children that we have in our community. And I pose this question: If the learning community concept is an idea that we want to adopt, then we need to look at this in terms of the Lincoln School System, the Grand Island School System, the Lexington School System, because the populations of children of color are growing, growing, growing. This problem is going to be with us and we need to be realistic about the solution. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Howard. Senator Kopplin.

SENATOR KOPPLIN: Question.