

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
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FLOOR DEBATE

April 11, 2006      LB 126, 1024

Legislature. A comment on LB 126, the bill we advanced last year, the Attorney General's Opinions are unanimous and clear. Between the time a...the signatures are certified to put an issue on the ballot and the actual election, it is out of bounds for the Legislature. It is not proper or constitutional for us to deal with that issue. Therefore, I would point out that the LB 126 opponents, sincere as many of them are, I think are getting used in this deal. The addition of the Connealy amendment would make LB 1024 unconstitutional, and when it is unconstitutional the Class I schools are still gone and OPS escapes without anything passed by the Legislature. Please keep that in mind. Let me add this. Comments have been addressed to the issue of funding for rural schools and, in particular, the amendment offered on Select File by Senator Lavon Heidemann. I would support the addition of that amendment. I would want the stabilization that he's talked about to be at 100 percent, rather than 103, and the good reason is that 103 is...I think has constitutional problems; 100 percent stabilization would address a very important and real issue that schools with declining enrollments face. He's also recommended that the minimum levy for those schools be 99 cents, and I would support that as well. To go on, LB 1024 begins the discussion after the Legislature with a new starting point. We have not totally finished anything. We have not ruled out anything or ruled in anything absolutely. The only things that happen, and please keep this in mind, the only things that happen if LB 1024 is passed is, number one, the school district boundaries in the metro area remain as they now are; number two, a conversation between all the school districts in the metro area begins; number three, the community group charged with coming up with a proposal to address integration issues in the metro area begins their work; number four, a coordinator in the Nebraska Department of Education which has the responsibility of addressing programming needs for high-needs students is established. Those four things are all that happens before we begin next session. It's important that we get there. We've been on the starting point that we're on now for three months and more. We need to move off of that. We need to get down the road, and I think this is a way that establishes the certainty we need in order to continue the discussion. So I'm going to oppose the reconsideration motion by Senator Cornett, and