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FLOOR DEBATE

April 13, 2006 LB 1199

commitment to pursuing an open debate. And I want to say how much I appreciate the relationship we shared the past two sessions. In this year's State of the State Address I set goals that sounded simple yet at times seemed unattainable. Among those were completing a budget that would set priorities and enacting legislation that addressed the need for tax relief for Nebraska families, the need to help address water issues, and the need to provide better, more effective protection against sexual predators for our youngest and most vulnerable citizens. While a consensus was not always within reach on this issue, the members of this Legislature stood together, and I want to express my great appreciation for sending LB 1199 to my desk without a single dissenting vote. This is one of the many examples of the professionalism seen throughout this session. It is a clear demonstration that while there can be sometimes...sometimes be great disagreement about the best course of action to take, that when presented with a comprehensive and realistic approach to a problem, we can put our differences aside. You have reminded Nebraskans that their leaders have their best interests at heart and can come together to do the right thing. We have also strengthened our efforts to help attract greater numbers of our young people to agricultural careers and encouraged the expansion of livestock operations. We have invested in early childhood education, roads constructions for economic development, and provided tax credits for long-term care insurance. The list goes on and on. You and your colleagues have achieved a great deal and chief among the accomplishments this session was the action taken to provide tax relief while exercising fiscal restraint in setting priorities. We took another step toward ensuring that our state maintains a viable supply of our most precious natural resource now and into the future. Water will continue to be an issue that this body and future members will need to address. And this year you took action that provides both resources to our producers and helps position our state for our future. We were successful in providing funding for distance education. With regard to the issue of school boundaries, you were given a difficult task, and I am pleased that we were able to work through the differences that divide us. The action taken today was a much needed first step towards resolution of this very, very difficult issue. The proposal endorsed today is by no means a perfect solution, but