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FLOOR DEBATE

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it provides a road map to begin the discussions of what the final solution should look like. You have created an opportunity to involve the leaders of Omaha and the surrounding communities in planning for the future. This is an area that has seen tremendous economic development, and every indication is that it will continue to grow. Without question, that growth impacts local school districts, and this is an opportunity to resolve the issues of the past and plan for the future growth of this dynamic region. You have done your part and for that I am grateful. In spite of the remaining differences, I have faith that each of the parties involved will come together to do what is best in order to secure a brighter future for the students of the Omaha metropolitan area. Nebraskans have always worked together, and I have every confidence that we can face this challenge. Today, we face the reality that this is the final time this group of legislators will be together. While we are saying good-bye to 20 members of this distinguished body, you can be very proud of your collective achievements. I've had the honor of working with each and every one of you. The expertise you've gained and the knowledge that you provided a great service to your constituents and to this state is a reward that you will always carry with you. You have my heartfelt thanks for your commitment and dedication to Nebraska. Today, we also say farewell to your leader and Speaker, a man who has organized the work of this body and who remains committed to a lively exchange of competing ideas during his two years of leadership. Mr. Speaker, thank you for your friendship, your professionalism, and your vision. Our state is losing a variety of leaders: from champions for the interests of farmers, ranchers, and the rural way of life, to senators committed to economic development and planning for a strong future, to advocates for open and honest debate, and a fixture in the presiding chair. I want you to know that I am proud to have served with each and every one of you. The spirited nature of this legislative chamber will lose some of its character when you go. But you should take pride in knowing that you have set the bar very high for those who will follow. My hope is that the legacy of leadership, of spirited debate, and respect for the rule of law you leave behind will be taken up by the next generation of lawmakers. As we look toward the centennial session of the Nebraska Legislature, what I will remember is