

Senator Withem and Senator Landis. Senator Withem is here. Senator Withem, you mentioned, you mentioned that there was small town support for LB 444. Now I agree there is small town support for LB 443 which was incorporated into 444 and my amendment would not modify that portion of the bill. But in reading the committee statement I guess I don't see any proponents from small towns for 444 and the amendment which I have, as you know, does affect only the original LB 444. So I guess I have a problem with that statement that Senator Withem made, that there is a lot of support for 444 among small towns in rural Nebraska. Then, Senator Landis, his dissertation was quite learned, but I wanted to ask him a question specifically about the Westside thing, if he does really think that that is a fair situation where we have separate rules for this situation in Omaha where Westside can vote separately. See, they don't vote with Omaha as a unit. They don't vote with Omaha as a unit as indicated in this sheet that I sent around. They vote separately. So I wanted to specifically ask Senator Landis if he supported that concept. How he could support that when he is supporting LB 444 in its pristine form which allows, would not allow separate classes of school districts to resolve their destiny. I guess that is a contradiction that I don't think this Legislature should allow happen. Now maybe we should change the Westside thing. That is a possibility. Maybe we should. Certainly, if we're going to pass LB 444 in its present form, we should change the Westside exclusion. We should change that because there is no reason in the world why we should have a different rule for school districts out in the rural areas and then still allow the protection of Westside in Omaha. I should not just pick on Westside, I think it is some other schools in the metropolitan Omaha would also be affected, but this just does not make a bit of sense to me and I feel very strongly about this because we should not be discriminated against in that manner. And all the arguments I have heard have not zeroed in on that point, have not zeroed in on that point. Why should we allow a different system in the metropolitan area of Omaha in regard to...you can call it protecting turf. Protecting turf in Omaha is much...would be easy whereas outstate Nebraska that could not happen. And, you know, I'm not opposed to consolidation of school, I'm glad to see it happen on a voluntary basis. It is happening. We have a number of Class I's who are being consolidated voluntarily with other schools and that is good, but I think those people out there should make that decision. They are in better control of what the local situation is and why they would desire to consolidate or not to desire to consolidate. So I just would renew my plea,