

pilot project should work. We decided that pilot projects are supposed to be a time limit. That's the reason for a pilot project and that that shouldn't just go on year after year. And also realizing that people wanted some flexibility, this gives that flexibility to the State Department of Education and to the state board. We have heard a number of people who can certainly justify how we save money in the end by supporting childhood... early childhood education and so, Senator Witek, I hope maybe you're listening to an explanation which I'm not sure if you are as to why the Education Committee... an explanation as to why the Education Committee did not pass this out but recommended that it go to Appropriations to allow for more flexibility, to allow for the State Board of Education to make some decisions as to which programs they would fund, at what level, and if they wish to start new programs and realizing that we shouldn't continue on with pilot projects particularly. Pilot projects should come to an end. So it was that kind of a discussion, a discussion realizing the importance of early childhood education, certainly the documentation to support that and this would give the money to, as I said, to the State Board of Education, to the Department of Education and the state board to make those decisions as to where they think these money... these funds should flow in the whole area of early childhood education and, as I've said, other people have talked about the successes they saw. We did travel to Omaha and to Falls City as a committee and met with those people who were involved in that in those areas and so with that I rise in opposition to the Witek amendment. Actually appreciate the chance to talk about it and give our rationale as to why we went this direction to the Appropriations Committee. I ask that you do not support the Witek amendment. Thank you.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Bohlke. Senator Wesely, your light is next, followed by Senators Witek and Vrtiska.

SENATOR WESELY: Madam President and members, very briefly, this is a bill that I worked on back in '89 with Senator Crosby and Senator Withem and we did pass it. We did want to see how this would work. As was indicated, it's been a success. There's no reason to stop the program, it's every reason to move forward with it and expand the chances to provide for these type of programs across the State of Nebraska. The idea that we had with it was to try and model some projects that other schools could try and learn from and then, on their own, move forward, as well as these projects, on their own and clearly in my view