

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

March 18, 1998 LB 1228

over time. And if you go back into the seventies, phonics was the be-all, end-all, and then kind of shifted into the eighties and nineties and it's moving more toward whole language. And it ebbs and flows, kind of like party control ebbs and flows, Democrats and Republicans. And he said, right now there are some schools where the ebb or the flow has turned so that whole language is pretty much everything that's used, and they're ignoring phonics to some degree. And one of those schools, according to my father, was Millard. And so if you wonder why Senator Witek's in the middle of this, it's because Millard happens to be one of the schools in this state where they've basically moved to a whole language approach, and there's parents saying, hey, Johnny can't learn to read because he's not getting any phonics. Well, at Millard that may be true. Now, I'm going to rise in support of this amendment because I...the way I read it, and I'm just a young lawyer, not an old lawyer, but the way I see this law is that it says, must be a part of the reading curriculum, not all the reading curriculum, part of the reading curriculum. And that means it can be 10 percent, or 20 percent, or whatever that school determines, but it still has to be part. And the way this learned man, my father, described it, Mr. Ph.D. said, Jon, kids need both, kids have to have both. And at a school like Millard, it sounds like they're not getting both. And so I think Senator Witek's amendment is going to solve the problem. There are a lot of schools in this state who don't need this amendment. There are a lot of schools in this state who are already doing the right thing and using both, but unfortunately there are a few that are not. And this particular amendment, I think, will solve that problem. I hate to put mandates on schools, I hate to tell them how to teach, but sometimes when the pendulum swings too far, like I think it has in a few districts, you have to result to these kind of solutions. So I'm going to rise in support of the amendment and I hope you support it as well. Thank you.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Bruning. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Madam Lieutenant Governor and members of the Legislature, I think I agree to some extent with what Senator Bruning has described as the ebb and flows in terms of educational fashions or educational theories, that is...that is true. But for me, it's always seemed the interference at the