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in the last few sessions, an area of high interest to me is the area of teacher shortage. It's an area that transcends all parts of the state--small school districts, large urban districts. We are at a point in our history that we will be judged, as this Legislature, working in partnership with local school districts, on how we address this issue, which isn't just Nebraska's issue but is also a national issue. Just a month or two ago, the cover of Newsweek magazine said, Who Will Teach Our Kids, and mentions that half of all teachers will retire by the year 2010. I think this issue is one that we, as a Legislature, need to have options. We need to look at ways that we can come together, that we can compromise, discuss, and, as Chair of the committee, I would do my very best to bring all the ideas that we have as we look at this very critical issue to our state to give you choices, as members of the Legislature, to help resolve this issue. I have introduced bills in this regard and you did pass two of those last year. They don't have funding and I'm hoping this year they will. But there are other ideas out there that need to be brought to the table in this regard. I also have introduced bills dealing with school truancy and that ties to my interest, as you know, in juvenile justice, and I think that from my work in that area I know, as you know, that school success is critical to the ability of our young people to be able to achieve their goals and to stay connected to their schools and communities, and that takes special training, that takes a commitment of teachers and administrators to make school a welcoming place and to help those children with special needs. As far as my experience, I've been a public official before I came to the Legislature. I served eight years on the Sarpy County Board of Commissioners, and I served as its Chairperson. I also chaired the Budget and Finance Committee for six of the eight years that I was on that county board. I worked in state government as director of Youth Services Planning, working on implementation of reform to the juvenile justice system, and also to address rising juvenile crime in the state, all issues that connect to the issues of the Education Committee, at least indirectly if not directly. And I also worked as executive director of the Omaha Community Partnership and we, as a community collaborative group in Douglas and Sarpy County, focused on issues of truancy and on issues of substance abuse and crime as it affected youth in our community, and two bills