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(Begin Belt #6a)

Unfortunately, some people might agree to that. But, the facts of life are as Senator Fellman has suggested, that unless there is some kind of substantial public demand for this, we've got no business putting it up to the vote of the people because the people don't want it put up to vote. And one reason they don't want it put up to vote is because to put this thing on the ballot costs thousands and thousands and thousands of taxpayer dollars. So, let's kill this motion right now.

PRESIDENT: Senator Fellman. Now, will Senators Stahmer, Dickinson and Kelly turn your lights off? I've got you on the lists.

SENATOR FELLMAN: Mr. President, members of the Legislature. I'd like to know how many of you who are voting here or are about to vote on this measure would like to vote upon the merger of other school districts in the state. I haven't been here as long as many of you but I've read the newspapers and I know how controversial the whole question of school merger has been in this state historically. And I doubt whether there would be much support from any one of you if there were bills merging here in the Legislature districts that have historically been separated and that historically have done good jobs, in the areas that you represent. Now, I can see a liberal coalition developing between Senator Stahmer and Senator Cavanaugh and Senator Marsh. Sometimes I belong to that coalition but I've probably and permanently become excluded. Maybe because of this position on this vote. But I think I have a duty to represent the people who live in the district that I serve. And that district happens to be split almost 50-50 between District 66 and the Omaha school district. And there is no body of opinion in the Omaha school district within my legislative area in favor of this. I would suggest to Senator Cavanaugh if he wanted to learn a little bit about this subject, if he wanted to participate, he might have attended some of the meetings. I'd like to wonder what Senator Marsh would suggest if we say that the suburban areas in Lincoln such as the Waverly school district, which is in a suburban area that Lincoln is approaching, should immediately be merged into the Lincoln school district. Well, you'll take it. But what about the people, let's talk to Senator Warner. Let's vote, let the entire people of Lincoln vote on the issue. Let's everyone in Omaha vote on the issue of whether Omaha should have its districts merged. But what about the people who live outside of the city district, live outside of the city limits, who also send their kids to Millard or to Ralston? What is being shown here in this debate is that this is a dream of Senator Stahmer's without substance and without adequate proof that these high and lofty goals can be met. I would suggest to those of you who would like to learn more that you missed your opportunity and that you should have gone to the committee hearings when Senator Stahmer brought in experts, from Pennsylvania to tell the people of Nebraska what to do. We have debated this, this has been heard in committee, we are now going through most of what would occur in a full debate. And I would like to ask as the final question whether all of you in this Legislature want all of the districts merged in this state. I would guess that Senator Stahmer might say yes. I would say that most of us would say no. And if the answer is no, and if we don't want mergers on a wholesale basis, then there's absolutely no reason to vote for this merger.