

March 21, 1979

LB 403

SPEAKER MARVEL: The Chair now recognizes Senator Rumery for a motion on LB 403.

SENATOR RUMERY: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, it is with a little reluctance that I ask you to help us raise this bill, 403, that was indefinitely postponed by the Education Committee. I would like to review for you the reasons for the bill. LB 403 is an act intended to amend Section 79-1701 to provide exemption to the state school laws for private, denominational and parochial schools and to require that these schools meet standards set forth in the bill. Specifically the act would provide that unless requested by the school, any private, denominational or parochial school, shall not be governed by the general school laws of the state except the compulsory education requirements. Under the present law it is sometimes difficult if not impossible to establish and operate a private or denominational school due to the cost involved under the certification requirements set down in state law. In many areas of Nebraska there is a keen interest among parents to establish their own schools but are prohibited from doing so because of the costs involved. The purpose of this bill is to provide the opportunity for the establishment of private and denominational schools in keeping with the desire of parents. It is further intended that the revocation procedures outlined in this bill will provide an adequate incentive to insure that the schools provide as good an education as that offered by the public schools. I further want it understood, Mr. President and colleagues, that I am not so-called, out after the public schools. Anyone that wants to examine my record for the support of public education will find in the years since I have been in the Legislature that I have been a constant supporter of public schools and I still plan to be that and this in my view does not have anything to do with my criticism of the public schools. There are small groups of citizens across this state who have serious concerns about the education that their children ought to have, at least in their view, and I, for one, do not want to stand in the way of them having the opportunity to give their children the education that they think they should have. I have talked to a few of the ones who are in the process of establishing private and denominational schools and they have assured me that they are going to strive as diligently as they know how to conduct a high quality school. In other words, they do not want the thought spread that they are going to conduct an inferior school. I, for one, think they ought to have an opportunity to try it. It is the parents' responsibility and we might say, some of us might say and have said, well, you are