

March 4, 1980

LB 769

Special Education. I ask for the advancement of this bill as amended to E & R Initial.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Kahle and then Senator Johnson.

SENATOR KAHLE: Mr. Speaker and members, Senator Koch explained this correctly and we will probably have to vote for it in order to comply with the federal terminology, but I had a lot of trouble and still have a lot of trouble with the new language, "behaviourally impaired". It means a whole lot different to me than "emotionally disturbed", and, of course, that is what some parents and also some of the educators and the federal government apparently want. But I see a problem with behaviourally impaired because just because a child may not behave well certainly would not put him in the category that we are thinking about. I think we are thinking about a child that has a handicap of some sort and a problem, emotionally or otherwise, and I think the term "behaviourally impaired" is not a good one. I don't have a better one at the moment so I expect we will have to pass this the way it is, but it surely in my estimation, at least, does not do anything to alleviate the stigma, if there is any, along with that problem, because I guess it is an old cliché that "a rose by any other name would still smell the same". So I think we are going to have to pass this in order to be in compliance with the federal government, but I think it is a lousy term. Thank you.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Johnson.

SENATOR JOHNSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker and members of the body, I have a question of Senator Koch which I would like to have him answer if he would, and that is this, Senator Koch, the bill it seems to me is a very innocuous bill just changing the category from "emotionally disturbed" to "behaviourally impaired", and I don't have any problem with changing the labels because the bill label is less offensive to the people, but this bill as amended would also add a classification of youngsters as youngsters qualified to receive and in need of Special Education, and those are youngsters who are labeled as autistic youngsters, and my question is this, have autistic children been served presently under the Special Education laws, or the Special Education program, and if they have not so been served, then would not that amendment add considerable cost to our Special Education programs?

SENATOR KOCH: Thank you, Senator Johnson. The first answer