

a great effect on our city. First of all I should back up a little bit and tell you, I hope that it is clear in your minds what this bill does. It does set out election by district. What we have right now in the City of Lincoln our school board people are nominated by district. In other words, the top two people are taken from each district and they run off against each other in the General Election, so, it is not a straight at large system, it is somewhere in between an at large system and a district election system. It is a system that many, many people in Lincoln think is working just fine. This bill came through the Education Committee, and at that point in time I did vote to advance it to the floor of the Legislature because I did feel that it was a close question and I did feel like it should be debated before the entire legislature. There are some good arguments in favor of district elections. I am not philosophically necessarily opposed to the concept. But, I think that there are some arguments that counterbalance and overweigh the arguments that are being made by the proponents of the bill. First of all I would point out to you that the concept of District Elections in cities has had its problems historically. In Chicago in the early 60's the education system was being destroyed according to the information that I have gotten from a University of Nebraska professor who has worked in the area of education history. Much of that destruction was attributed to political deviousness that derived from a district system and the eventual control of those districts by local political machines. Now obviously Lincoln and Chicago are a long ways apart, not only geographically but in terms of the types of communities that are under consideration. But, nonetheless, there is an argument to be made that straight district elections lead to political, more politics in the system and less interest for the community, less concern for the community at large. Now, balance against some of the obvious arguments that you are going to hear in favor of district elections, please consider what I feel to be some realities. First of all there are some strong arguments to be made in favor of the present system. Our present system, let me remind you again, requires that people be nominated in the primary by district. So, they must have some allegiance to their district in order to be one of the top two people nominated from their district. Then after that they run at large, city-wide in the general election. Theoretically that part of the system ensures that they have some concern for the community at large. So we are trying to get the best of both systems. This next point, I think is very important, the system that Lincoln now has in effect has been in effect for just two years, just two years, in other words our entire school board has not been elected under the new system.

SPEAKER MARVEL: You have one minute.

SENATOR BEUTLER: We must, and I think that it is incumbent