

SENATOR VICKERS: Mr. President and members, I don't quite know how to stand up and oppose such a noble bill as Senator Sieck has brought to us. It is a little difficult to stand up and say that I am for mental retardation, so I guess I won't quite do that, but I will point out to the body what we are doing. As Senator Sieck so aptly pointed out, it is in the legislation right now that the school districts shall teach in general specifics about drug abuse and how that relates to mental retardation. What Senator Sieck is attempting to do is narrow those specifics down and tell those local school districts exactly what they should have to teach about, and that is what I object to. Historically, this Legislature through the Department of Education have granted the authority to local school districts in broad terms to set their own curriculum. We have mandated only in large areas certain curriculum and that curriculum is general in the four specific study areas, a large certain number of hours in each one of those but we allow the local school districts, the local schools to set their own curriculum within those areas with the one exception and that exception was alluded to this morning, and that is American History. And I feel very strongly that we should allow the local school districts that discretion. We should allow the local school districts the discretion they have right now in the statutes to teach mental retardation, to teach drug abuse as they have got right now and as Senator Sieck indicated to you they have. I don't think it is our place to act as the grand school board for the entire State of Nebraska and dictate to those public schools exactly what they should teach in this area. Senator Hoagland mentioned that this bill was killed inadvertently in the committee. Well, it might have been as far as some members are concerned, but I can assure you as one member of the Education Committee that it wasn't inadvertent. I just urge the body's careful consideration as to exactly what we are doing in this area, even though Senator Sieck is rightfully concerned about a area that I think we should all be concerned about. I also urge this body's concern when we look at local control of our public schools and the way that we are trying to undermine that local control. Thank you, Mr. President.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Haberman.

SENATOR HABERMAN: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I, too, would like to commend Senator Sieck for the work he has done in this field. He has done quite a bit since I have been here, had a lot of good legislation passed. But I feel in this case I am going to have to oppose Senator Sieck because the words here say enough for me. It says LB 254 would mandate to the public schools, and again I feel as Senator Vickers ended his talk on, local