

a logic to age 17 in the sense that it corresponds more closely with the date of graduation from high school. Kids are dropping out in Nebraska. I was not able to get statistics for the whole state but I did pass out to you some statistics for the City of Lincoln, and if you look at Lincoln for the past five years, you will see that in each year of the last three years of high school, in the sophomore year, in the junior year and in the senior year, a certain percentage of the class was dropping out, typically 5 and 6 percent each year. So for a student who is graduating from 12th Grade in the City of Lincoln, by the time he graduates as a minimum 20 percent of his classmates will have dropped out. This bill is not going to solve all the problems of education, obviously, but I think one thing that we have to do is to reemphasize again the importance of education. In a democratic society that depends on an intelligent and informed citizenry I don't think we can back away from education. The trend in Lincoln for the years that I have, '75, '76 through '79, '80, shows the dropout rate is increasing despite the fact that over the last ten or fifteen years we have given in to this trend in education to be relevant for the students. We become more relevant for the students and more of them drop out. Something is not working and I think we have to ask ourselves some questions. I am getting a little far afield now, but my point is simply that the dropout rate is scary. A fifth of our students are not completing high school and I think we can do better than that, and we should do better than that as a society. With that I think I will conclude my opening remarks. I would comment, however, that the bill is supported by the Teachers Association. If there is any group of people that is worried about discipline in the schools, of course, it would be the teachers, but they have thought about this bill and they have balanced the advantages against the disadvantages and they are of the opinion that it is to the advantage of the students of this state to stay in school if possible. So I would ask your support for this simple concept. Thank you.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Haberman, do you wish to speak?

SENATOR HABERMAN: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I guess I again will have to play the devil's advocate. I don't believe this bill is in order because there is no fiscal sheet, and Senator Beutler has said there is no fiscal impact. Well, I disagree with him because the bill says that those students in the visual handicapped school and the Nebraska School for Deaf will also be kept until they are 17 and this is a fiscal impact. I feel we should know how much this is going to be. I also feel that