

CLERK: 28 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President, on the motion to advance LB 587.

PRESIDENT: The motion prevails. The bill advanced. LB 405.

CLERK: Mr. President, 405 was a bill offered by Senator Wesely and Senator Lamb. (Read title.) The bill was read on January 18. It was referred to the Education Committee, advanced to General File. I have no amendments to the bill.

PRESIDENT: Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the Legislature, LB 405 deals with a problem that we've talked about in this state for some time and across the nation, asbestos removal. It first came to light nationally in 1979. We attempted to pass legislation at that time and the federal government usurped us and basically said they were going to handle it. Of course they didn't and left us hanging for a couple of years. We came back in with some legislation which worked with the schools to help them get started on cleaning up their problems and followed up with additional legislation a couple of years ago which allowed them to separately levy and account for their asbestos removal costs, and that provision had a sunset on it of August of this year. Recently the EPA has again entered into the situation. They are now talking about fining some of the school districts. A lot of the school districts that have been kind of hanging back are ready to move forward, so they need a couple more years to deal with the problem. Most of the larger schools have already dealt with it. This bill would be most affecting those small schools in the state. Again, it is purely optional. It gives them another I guess option to deal with the problem that they now have. It is purely a voluntary situation. We want to try and stick a carrot out there to encourage them to remove this asbestos, if possible. Asbestos is very carcinogenic and needs to be removed. There is no federal requirement that it has to be removed. There are federal requirements in terms of inspection and then reporting any hazard. That is where the fines are coming from, for violation of that mandate. But otherwise it is a purely voluntary situation so far. Many of the schools are ready to move. They need this assistance. It is a local option that they do not have