

SENATOR LANDIS: All right. I'd be happy to close if we could just agree to that as a general rule. The bill, at this point, does several things, all of which are worthy of our support. First, the bill recognizes the value of rural schools and makes attempts to keep them open and viable. Secondly, it recognizes that a two-tier system of school tax obligation is wrong and that to surmount that there are several options available to Class I schools. Number one, they can consolidate and stay open. Number two, they can consolidate and voluntarily close or, number three, they can affiliate and pay a high school levy. The third thing the bill does is to recognize that the reliance on the property tax is too great in the school area and sets up the goal of moving to the day when we won't have to rely so heavily on it. That, too, is a goal that we all commonly share. Fourth, the bill builds in mechanisms for study and for alteration to make these basic concepts work. It isn't rushed into, it isn't thrown down people's throats in two weeks time. We've taken time to build into there a mechanism to look at what we are about to do and to make whatever adjustments are necessary to make the concepts live. You know those three concepts ought to be able to co-exist; doing away with a two-tier tax obligation difference, recognizing the value of rural schools and keeping them open, and moving away from reliance on the property tax. Is there anything in that list of three that has to contradict the other two? I don't think so. LB 662 is premised on the philosophy that says those things are not contradictory. It is trying to achieve that goal. It is a major piece of legislation whose time has come but who needs additional fine tuning, both by study and by amendment perhaps next year. But those concepts are the ones we should adhere to and support today. Let's move LB 662.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Lamb then Senator Labeledz, but Senator Lamb, may I introduce some guests of Senator Barrett. Under the south balcony they are Mr. and Mrs. Bill Podraza of Lexington, Nebraska. He is the City Manager at Lexington. Would you please stand and be recognized. Thank you. Senator Lamb.

SENATOR LAMB: Mr. President, members, I ask that the bill not be advanced today. I think any reasonable person in this room will say that the bill is a hodgepodge at this point. Even Senator DeCamp agrees with me on that. He