

think that if Senator Hartnett is sincere about this, and I am sure he is because he is representing the interest of his district and the schools in his district, that he, like all of us, should wait until the Education Committee with this study advisory group comes up with some conclusions that we can base some evidence that is brought about in that study to what the role and mission of Educational Service Units should be, but to allow them to opt out I think is inappropriate at this time. I guess this goes back to the NRD situation. You could talk about that. I think you are just going to deteriorate away the ability of the ESUs to function. As I said, I think this study is going to be good from the standpoint that we will be able to assess what role the Educational Service Units will play in this state, whether they should be mandated throughout the state or whether they should be operating only in those areas in which those people want to participate in them. But it is clear that if a few large school districts in the state are allowed to opt out of the Educational Services Units, I think you are going to see a tremendous deterioration of the Educational Service Units as a whole, and I think it will have a significant impact upon small schools which do depend very heavily upon the programming provided by Educational Service Units. So I object to the amendment. I think it is getting the cart before the horse at this particular point. Let's see what the study brings out. I think Senator Vickers and Senator Baack have both discussed the merits of this advisory study committee that is going to be formed if this bill does advance and pass, and I think then we will be able to better assess the needs of our state and I think then we will be able to vote on this particular idea at that time, but until then, I think it is inappropriate that we would allow the school districts to opt out before we even have an opportunity to know what programs are needed in the state and what the impact is going to be upon all the schools, not just the big ones that have the tax base or the ability to provide services that an awful lot of small districts in my area cannot provide just simply because of their size. So because of those reasons, I am going to oppose the amendment, and I certainly would like to see the rest of the body do likewise although I recognize that Senator Hartnett has a point that has to be made, and I hope he will bring that point to the study committee when it begins its work.

SENATOR CARSTEN: Thank you, Senator Johnson. Senator