

blank check. They write out their budget and the county board has no choice but to approve it. Two years ago when Cole, Layer and Trumble came in and reappraised all the property in Douglas County, Senator Lynch's district, they got as high as 300 percent increase in their valuations. Everybody in Douglas County and Omaha got increased valuations. The city and the county turned around and said, we're going to lower our mill levy or our rates, but the school board reaped a windfall of millions of dollars and then increased their budget a couple hundred thousand dollars. I am sick and tired of hearing in Omaha, and I can't speak for Lincoln, and I can't speak for you outstate senators, but I can tell you this, in Omaha they are constantly whining, well, the Legislature did it to us. I have to laugh when I go through the schools in my district and I see that they have radios that connect directly to the "castle". The castle is the Joslyn castle where the school board has their offices. It takes up two square blocks in Omaha. And I asked a teacher once, I said, why do you have these radios going to the school board? Well, they said, in case of a disaster we wouldn't lose contact. I thought, you wouldn't? They plug into electrical outlets. So in a disaster if a phone doesn't work, the electricity will? I don't know how many of those phones...radios they have got, and yet if you wanted to call one of the schools in Omaha and tell them, your mother's been rushed to the hospital, those schools aren't listed in the phone book. You can't reach them unless you first, I guess, find out that you call the school board and then maybe the school board gets a hold of them somehow. I don't know how they do it. But the main thing is, Omaha Public Schools, and I do not speak about anybody else's district, but it's time they fish or cut bait and I say they had better start cutting bait because I enumerated yesterday to you the outlandish programs that we are paying for that have nothing to do, in my opinion, toward helping a young...

SENATOR CARSTEN: Thirty seconds.

SENATOR HIGGINS: ...person actually learn how to live their life, how to attain some kind of a career that they will be self-supporting and they will not end up on our social services rolls and we have to support them. I am sick and tired of the school districts blaming this Legislature and I think it's time we got together and we sent the message. That's why, last year, I voted and I told the school board, I voted to cut your aid to send you a message and I'm going to continue to do it until you start cutting unnecessary programs and the paper pushers. You