

January 19, 1981

SPEAKER MARVEL PRESIDING

SPEAKER MARVEL: The prayer this morning will be given by Reverend Roe, the United Methodist Minister affiliated with the Trinity Methodist Church in Lincoln, Nebraska. Reverend Roe.

REVEREND ROE: Prayer offered.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Roll call. Item #3. Will you please record your presence if you haven't already. Record your vote.

CLERK: There is a quorum present, Mr. President.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Ready for item #3?

CLERK: Yes, sir. Mr. President, first of all, corrections to the Journal. (Read corrections to the Journal as found on page 220 of the Legislative Journal.)

Mr. President, I have an Attorney General's Opinion addressed to Senator Sieck regarding LB 58. (See pages 220 and 221 of the Legislative Journal.) I have a series of reports, the first from Frank Marsh, the State Treasurer, regarding the detailed statement of the condition of the State Treasury.

Mr. President, a communication from the Metropolitan Technical Community College regarding LB 1004; a communication from the State Department of Correctional Services regarding program evaluation of the therapeutic community at the Lincoln Correctional Center.

Mr. President, a deposit or communication from David O. Coolidge who is the Director-State Engineer of the Department of Roads pursuant to LB 722. Those will all be on file in my office, Mr. President.

Mr. President, your Committee on Constitutional Revision and Recreation gives notice of public hearing in Room 1019 for January 30, February 5 and February 6. (Signed) Senator Labeledz as Chairperson.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Okay, we now go to item #4, introduction of new bills.

CLERK: Mr. President, new bills: Read title to LB 284-309 as found on pages 223 through 228 of the Legislative Journal.

LB 19, 76, 102, 103, 107, 146,
147, 200, 284, 290, 305, 306,
316, 318, 326, 338, 371, 374,
389, 398, 441, 487

March 19, 1981

to LB 290. Have you all voted? One more time, have you all voted? Four. Have you all voted? Okay, record the vote.

CLERK: 16 ayes, 23 nays on the adoption of the DeCamp amendment.

SPEAKER MARVEL: The motion fails.

CLERK: Mr. President, a series of materials to read in: Senator Schmit would like to print amendments to LB 284. (Amendments printed separate and on file in the Clerk's office. Request No. 2118.)

I have an Attorney General's opinion addressed to Senator DeCamp regarding LB 76. (See pages 1026-1028 of the Journal.)

Senator Koch asks to be excused Monday and Tuesday of next week; Senator Fitzgerald excused next Monday.

Your committee on Public Works whose chairman is Senator Kremer reports LB 200 to General File; 326 to General File; 146 to General File with amendments; 147 as indefinitely postponed; 398 as indefinitely postponed, (Signed) Senator Kremer as Chair. (See pages 1028-1029 of the Journal.)

Your committee on Public Health reports LB 389 to General File with amendments and 107 as indefinitely postponed, (Signed) Senator Cullan. (See pages 1030-1032 of the Legislative Journal.)

Senator Chambers would like to print amendments to LB 76. (See pages 1032-1036 of the Legislative Journal.)

Senator Cullan reports LB 487 to General File with amendments, (Signed) Senator Cullan. (See pages 1036-1040.)

Education reports LB 305 to General File; 316 to General File with amendments; 318 to General File with amendments; 338 to General File with amendments; 371 to General File; 441 to General File with amendments, (Signed) Senator Koch. (See pages 1040-1042.)

Mr. President, your committee on Revenue reports LB 19, 102, 103, 306, 374 all indefinitely postponed, (Signed) Senator Carsten, Chair.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Is that it?

CLERK: Yes.

SPEAKER MARVEL: The motion is carried. The bill is advanced. The next bill is LB 305.

CLERK: Mr. President, LB 305 offered by Senator Beutler. (Read title). The bill was first read on January 19 last year, referred to the Education Committee for public hearing. The bill was advanced to General File. Mr. President, I have no amendments to the bill.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Beutler, do you want to explain the bill first?

SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, LB 305 contains one and only one concept and it essentially raises the compulsory school age from 16 to 17. And my sole and entire purpose in presenting the bill is to try to encourage parents and students to complete their high school education. I think as a society in our society today which is becoming ever more complex where job skills are ever more important, that it is important for us to make a statement as a Legislature that we think it would be good for the youth of this state to complete their high school education, that it will be good for them in terms of their education as a citizen, in terms of some additional vocational education that they can acquire, and in terms of their saleability on the job market. I think that no one will disagree that a person with a high school diploma has more of an opportunity on the job market than one without, generally speaking. The word "compulsory", of course, has bad connotations but I want to make a comment on that. The compulsory education law in Nebraska is not particularly well enforced. If a student doesn't really want to go to school, we in this state have not traditionally forced him to be in school, and I don't assume that that judgment will change regardless of what we do with the law today. If we change the compulsory age from 16 to 17, the law will still be pretty much administered as it is today. So we will not be forcing disciplinary problems into the schools but what we will be doing is encouraging a portion of those students and a portion of those parents, a large portion of them I think, into thinking about the value of completing the education and going ahead and completing the education. Age 17 doesn't bring you to the end of your high school career in most cases but I think that it does get you close enough so that you can see the light at the end of the tunnel so that you can see putting in the extra time to go ahead and get that extra vocational course or to go ahead and get that diploma which I think in almost all cases will be helpful for the student. There is no particular logic to age 16. I think there is a logic to age 17, more of

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

16 was set and back in the old days it was younger because we needed these young people to go to work out on the farms. I don't believe raising it to 17 is going to really solve that much of a problem. If it does, well then we will raise it to 18, and where do we quit? So I can't see the raising it to the 17, this is going to cause some hardships in a lot of families that the boys can't go out and get a job and go to work. It might even put more people that they will have to be on welfare. In this day and age at 16 years old the youngsters are much smarter. They know a lot more about the world. I would say that they are more capable of making a decision whether they want to stay in school or not. But I guess that is some of the reasons. The other reason is that there is a fiscal impact on this, Senator Beutler, and I feel we should know what it is, especially due to these two schools that you have included in the bill. Thank you, Mr. President.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Lamb.

SENATOR LAMB: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I also have reservations about this bill. The theory is great but in actual practice I am afraid it won't work. If there are older students that don't want to go to school, it is really pretty difficult to force them. I would also draw your attention to the fact that the State School Board Association testified in opposition to the bill. Thank you.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Remmers and then Senator Rumery.

SENATOR REMMERS: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I don't really feel this bill does what I would like to see it do, but I am supporting it. I think it is at least a message in the right direction. My personal experience with the work release type of permits has been that anybody can get them, and the present law says that any child 14 years old, if his services are needed at home, that he can get a work release permit. As it has been used, most anybody can get it and I don't really know how we can tighten it up, but I think it should be. But on the other hand, to think that a 14 year old child's services are needed at home to support the family, I think in this day and age we should be able to find some other way to take care of that family that would not deny this child the opportunity for an education. I think we need to encourage students to stay in school at least until 18 because the job market is not there for untrained young workers. Our high rate of unemployment is definitely among the youth. The jobs simply are not there for them. And maybe they feel they are ready for the world, but I think we ought to do all

we could to encourage them to stay in school. Now in case you are not aware of what the law does say, well, it simply says a student of that age must be in school 8 hours a week. I think that is too low and I would like to see that raised. But I do support the philosophy in this bill and I may offer some amendments on Select File to tighten it up a little bit. Thank you.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Rumery.

SENATOR RUMERY: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I would like to ask Senator Beutler a question if I might. I think you partially answered the question a while ago in your opening remarks, but who insists on this bill? Who asked you to introduce it, or is it on your own?

SENATOR BEUTLER: Nobody asked me to introduce the bill. It derives from my experience on the Education Committee.

SENATOR RUMERY: Well, that's very good. I want to support the bill but I wondered why the School Board Association opposed it. Did they give any reason?

SENATOR BEUTLER: The School Board Association, Senator Rumery, I think was concerned about discipline problems in the schools, as best I can remember. I am trying to remember from the testimony at the hearing. Their testimony was not that strong, however. To my knowledge they have not lobbied anybody on the floor or have spoken other than at the public hearing, but they did express some concern about disciplinary problems, I think was their concern.

SENATOR RUMERY: Well, of course, we have those with 5th graders even sometimes....

SENATOR BEUTLER: Yes.

SENATOR RUMERY:but I think we ought to give this a chance. It seems to me like we ought to do everything we can to keep these kids in school, and if this is a little step that will do that, why I think we ought to try it.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator DeCamp.

SENATOR DeCAMP: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I am going to vote to advance this bill and keep it alive today but there are completely separate and different reasons than anybody here has enumerated and I would like to make it clear why I am doing it. As Senator Beutler must

be aware and some others are, it is the compulsory school education law that is really at the heart of all the Christian school issue. In other words, there is no need to worry about certification or noncertification or anything else if you are not compelled to attend school. It is only by having this as a back-up that the issue even comes into play, number one. Number two, I think it is time the Legislature looked at the entire issue of compulsory education in view of the fact, and it's a fact I doubt most of us are aware of, that on the three times it has been offered in the Constitution it has been defeated by votes of the people, every time, compulsory education going back to 1871, then 1875, then 1915. Everytime the people have had a chance to speak on it the people have voted against a compulsory education provision in the Constitution, different types. Now I personally happen to believe that some form of compulsory education law is proper and necessary particularly in the 21st, 22nd century, whatever, to make our people function as they are going to have to in a world of computers and everything else. So I am supporting keeping it alive at this point because I think it opens up a vista of other areas that we should be looking into as to the whole nature of what enforcement there should be on compulsory education as to how it interrelates with the other issue that we have discussed here before and as to what we should be doing in terms of the age limits. In response to Senator Lamb's comment I heard back there about turning it into a Christian school issue bill, no, there is no intention. In fact, I think Senator Koch can verify the fact that he and I have sat down kind of privately here in the last day or so and I have also talked to the Governor on the issue, and we have both agreed, all three of us have essentially agreed that we are going to sit back quietly, watch and hopefully Senator Koch without interference from anybody will be able to get something done in the next month or month and a half, and I just want to state that as a matter of public record. We are giving him every opportunity. He stated it on the floor. So, Senator Lamb, in response to your question I heard back there, no, I am not going to make it into a Christian school bill. But I repeat, it is behind everything on this issue because it is the compulsory education law that is the back-up that forces the issue of the school which forces the issue of certification. So I would urge you to keep it alive for the present.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Kahle.

SENATOR KAHLE: Mr. Speaker and members, perhaps I need to ask Senator Beutler a question. Would it be possible for

students to transfer to a technical school, technical community college and pick up their credits and still be within the 17 year compulsory limit? Or does that have nothing to do with what the bill is doing?

SENATOR BEUTLER: The bill itself does not address that possibility. If that was true before, it is true now. It doesn't change the law in that regard. Interestingly enough the early transfer bill that I put in this year, Senator Kahle, would provide for that in a limited sense and possibly in the future in a more expanded sense exactly what you are talking about but this particular bill doesn't change that situation. Now...well, it doesn't change it.

SENATOR KAHLE: Thank you, and I guess this is one of my concerns. I think one of the problems we have and I know that there is a lot more vocational training in some of our high schools than in others and some of our small high schools have a difficult time providing very much technical training. But I think maybe this is some of the reason for the dropout of students and I know some states do a lot better job of that than we do. So I couldn't really support this kind of legislation unless there was an option for them to go or to spend that last year or two that they have to spend in school in some sort of a technical education. As Senator Lamb and I were just discussing here, it is pretty hard to get a kid interested in English and maybe some of the other things that we have but he may want to take a technical education, and I think we ought to have that option. That is one of the problems that Nebraska has. I don't believe we....we force them into a curriculum that after they reach that age above 16 they may not want or maybe shouldn't be forced into because what we need is people with skills, and I wish there was some way we could teach ambition. Thank you.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Marsh.

SENATOR MARSH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to support LB 305. As you know, our military services are interested in having high school graduates apply for military service. Our reserve forces are interested in having high school graduates apply for military training. If the age limit is 16, that student may decide as soon as he or she is of legal age to try and go out and work, then that same student discovers that really not a very good paying job is available when you don't have the high school diploma, so they will join the military services and they may when they are 17. However, if LB 305 is adopted, that student will be

encouraged, no, not mandated, but encouraged to remain in school until that high school diploma is, in fact, in hand. Then that student, our citizens, will be better equipped to take their rightful place in the community in which that individual lives. That individual may then choose to join one of the military services and is a better qualified person to serve his or her country. This is another tool as I talked about this morning for good. It is a tool to see that more of the young people of our state are encouraged to remain in school until that diploma is in hand. In our fast world of technology we need and the young people following us need all the education that individual can acquire. That individual might, when things get tough, decide to drop out of school not nearly as likely to if the age is 17 which is a more usual age for graduation from high school, rather than the 16. What is magic about that 16? Only that in the State of Nebraska a person may acquire a driving license. That is not even true across the United States. Many foreign countries have the age of 18 as the minimum age for acquiring a driver's license. Let's move in the direction of saying as a state policy, we would like to have the young people of this state remain in school where possible until that person has acquired his or her high school diploma.

SPEAKER MARVEL: You have two minutes.

SENATOR MARSH: I urge your support for LB 305.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Koch.

SENATOR KOCH: Mr. Speaker and members of the body, I supported this legislation as you notice by your book, but I want to put the members of this body on record. Yesterday we dealt with 338. LB 338 was an attempt to bring about minimal standards for the public schools in the State of Nebraska as it relates to course offerings. Now if I were a young lad or a young lady attending a high school and they only offered me the minimum bare bone skeleton of a curriculum where all I could get was four years of English possibly and two years of science on an alternating basis and two years of math which would be basic algebra and geometry and maybe an elementary effort in vocational education and woodworking where you make bookends, I might become very bored with that system. However, if you are in a system and I will use one and not because of personal pride but School District 66 where they offer you a choice of about 245 courses that range anywhere from six years of mathematics to five years of language and several different fields of language to six years of English right down the

line plus art and a number of other programs, probability of statistics, I might want to stay there to enhance my own educational opportunities. But put me in some of the systems we know in the state today, I may want an early out. Either that or I will stay there because we say, you are going to stay until you are 17 come hell or high water, and then you become disruptive and then you affect others. I am just trying to give both sides of this issue. But I think this body has to be somewhat consistent in how we look at education. So 17 is not wrong. It is probably appropriate today because we know that knowledge is doubling so fast that we will probably none of us ever be completely up to date regardless of how old we are and how much the attempt is made to keep up and keep current. Now one other fact that I want to remind you. Senator Beutler talks about dropouts and certainly there have been dropouts but we have laws in this state on being truant. Now when these children are dropping out then it should be reported that that child is truant and the parent is not following through on the law. But then again it gets down to how strict are we going to enforce the law on being truant because there are some people that just look by it and say, thank God they are gone and we will put them on the dropout roll. So what we want to do, if we want to keep them in there through age 16, then we ought to enforce the truant laws and make certain that child is there every day and not dismissed until he has officially completed the course that he signed up to take. I really want to support age 17 but when I look at like the letter I got the other day from Senator Kahle's District which is my old home town of Campbell, they are down to 32 children in live bodies and there is an effort to be made to organize with Bladen and now they are playing cat and mouse with each other where they are going to go. But I'll bet if you examine the curriculums in those two school systems there wouldn't be much to keep you there beyond two years. If you are bright and you are willing to work you could probably take all of their courses if they had the teachers to give them to you. But I know they alternate on various years for science, math and other courses simply because they can't afford the full time instructors and offer that range of programs. So I just want to make sure you understand the issue. I will still vote to support 17 but I will still guarantee you there will still be dropouts and there may be more of them.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Beutler, do you wish to close on your motion?

SENATOR BEUTLER: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I think that there has

been fairly discussed on this floor the advantages of 305 and some of the disadvantages. I think I would just make two last comments and they are general and philosophical in nature but I think important. Recently we have seen the development of what is called the moral majority in this country and I think that one of the great values of that movement is that it has forced us to think again about spiritual values as opposed to materialistic values, and I think in that regard it represents a very positive influence on this country whether you agree with their positions on individual issues or not. And I am sorry to some extent that they have picked secular humanism as their enemy because there are many people who they would probably identify as secular humanists who are also people primarily concerned about spiritual values, about character. And to that extent the issue in this country it seems to me is distorted. The problem as I see it is rampant materialism and what is happening in our schools today is that we are letting that materialism eat its way down into our youth so that those who are supposed to be most idealistic in our society are themselves succumbing to materialism. And what I mean by that simply is that I think that most of the kids that are dropping out of high school today are doing so for money, for the immediate gratification of a car, a stereo set, not seeing the long term value of vocational education or the long term value of understanding the responsibilities of citizenship in a democracy, without understanding values relating to character, getting along with people, getting along in society, and that is why I want to discourage dropping out of school and doing everything possible to encourage staying in school. There are different theories of education and one of them that I think is true for some people is that they go along and all of a sudden they find something that is of interest to them and they catch fire, they have a catch fire theory of education. And I think that can happen at any point in their life. I think if you keep kids in school one more year, encourage them to finish their high school education, some of them will catch fire. Some of them won't learn very much, maybe most of them, but some of them will catch fire, and some of them will pick up a few more necessary things. Obviously, the old adage is true that you can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink. It is true of kids too. But my point is simply this, if you don't bring the horse to the water, they certainly aren't going to drink. That is what this bill simply attempts to do. Let's expose the kids to education. We have to do a number of other things to make our education more valuable to them, to make them see the value of that education and let's deemphasize the trend towards materialism. Thank you.

January 13, 1982

LB 305, 89A, 810-813

SPEAKER MARVEL: The motion is the advancement of LB 305 to E & R for Engrossment. All those in favor of advancing the bill vote aye, opposed vote no. Have you all voted? Record.

CLERK: 29 ayes, 11 nays, Mr. President, on the motion to advance the bill.

SPEAKER MARVEL: The motion is carried and the bill is advanced. The Clerk will read some items in on his desk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Marsh would like to print amendments to LB 89A in the Legislative Journal. (See pages 264-265 of the Journal.)

Mr. President, new bills. (Read LBs 810-813 by title for the first time. See page 264 of the Legislative Journal.)

SENATOR NICHOL PRESIDING

January 19, 1982

SENATOR CLARK: The motion lost. The next amendment is amendment number two of Senator Vickers to Section one. He wants to read a few things in first.

CLERK: Mr. President, very quickly, new bills: (Read by title for the first time, LBs 895-914 as found on pages 343-347 of the Legislative Journal.)

Mr. President, I have a hearing notice from the Public Works Committee for January 29, February 10, 11 and 17. That is signed by Senator Kremer as Chair.

Mr. President, Retirement sets hearings for Wednesday, January 7 and Revenue sets hearings for January 25, 26 and 27, signed by the respective chairmen.

I have a reference report referring LBs 848 through 880.

Mr. President, your committee on Enrollment and Review reports that 511 be reported to Select File with amendments, 192 Select File with amendments, 231 Select File with amendments, 454 Select File, 304 Select File, 69 Select File with amendments, 139 Select File, 139A Select File, 305 Select File, 239 Select File with amendments, 410 Select File with amendments, 278 Select File with amendments, 126 Select File with amendments, all signed by Senator Kilgarin.

SENATOR CLARK: We are now ready for the second Vickers amendment to Section one.

CLERK: Mr. President, the amendment reads as follows: On page 2, line 13, strike the word "life" and insert "safe yield."

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Vickers.

SENATOR VICKERS: Mr. President, since that is more of a technical one there the following amendment on Section two would be more applicable to take up and I think the Clerk has other amendments on Section one so if you would want to skip over this and go to the other amendments that are on Section one, that would be fine with me. You have other amendments and I think Senator Beutler and some other people might have amendments on Section one if you want to go ahead and take those up at this time.

CLERK: So are you withdrawing. . .you don't want this one then, Senator?

SENATOR VICKERS: That one is more of a technical one. It

out of the Chamber. We will have some matters read into the record at this time.

CLERK: Mr. President, I have an explanation of vote offered by Senator Koch to be inserted in the Legislative Journal. (See page 703.)

Mr. President, your Enrolling Clerk respectfully reports that she has on this day presented to the Governor the bills that were passed on Final Reading last Thursday.

Mr. President, I have a report from the Government, Military, and Veterans Affairs Committee regarding a gubernatorial appointment confirmation hearing.

Mr. President, Senator Labedz asks unanimous consent to add her name to LB 259 as co-introducer.

PRESIDENT: Unanimous consent has been asked on this co-introduction. Any objections? If not, so ordered. We are ready then with agenda item #6, Select File, LB 305, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Yes, sir. I have no E & R amendments. I do have an amendment from Senator Vickers. (Read Vickers amendment found on page 704, Legislative Journal.)

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Vickers.

SENATOR VICKERS: Mr. President and members, LB 305 is, as you know, would raise the mandatory attendance age from sixteen to seventeen. Now I am sure the introducer of this piece of legislation, Senator Beutler, has pure motives in his attempt to raise the age of mandatory attendance in the public schools but I can tell you from personal experience that what we are attempting to do here is unworkable at the least and undesirable at the most. The reason I can tell you that is because I quit high school when I was fifteen. It was illegal as far as the state statutes were concerned but the fact of the matter was my parents couldn't keep me in school any longer and how in the world the school was going to keep me there I don't know. I can also tell you that I think the teachers in the school rejoiced the day after I quit school because I was nothing but a detriment to the classes that I didn't attend or for the part time that I was there. Now I am not saying this because I am proud of it. I am not. That is a segment of my life that I would just as soon forget but I think we need to recognize that for those young people that are dissatisfied

with the system for the state to tell the schools that you have to force them to stay there for another year is completely unworkable. If a young person is dissatisfied and cannot see the relevancy to what he is doing, for us to attempt to force him to stay there is going to make a disruptive influence on all of the rest of the students that are in that class. It is going to make a disruptive influence on the entire school. So even though our intentions are pure, and I can assure you that as a member of the Coordinating Commission of Adult Education, I am concerned about the high school dropout rate, I am concerned about those young people who can't see the relevancy with what they are being taught, but to hold a club over their head in this manner is not the way to achieve the desired results. The desired results need to be achieved by looking at the system, trying to provide other alternatives, and by the way, Senator Beutler and I have got a bill that I think would do that. But what we are attempting to do with this bill is certainly not going to achieve those results. To put an issue of confrontation with those young people and the school system with the government is certainly not the way to address the situation. They have enough confrontation already. You know, one year from sixteen to seventeen doesn't seem like much when you are on the wrong side of forty like I am but one year to a person fifteen, sixteen years old is almost an eternity. If there is one thing that I have learned in my life is that the older I get the faster years go by but when I was fifteen I didn't think the next year would ever come, and for us to try to force those people to stay there when they have that feeling about the next year is certainly not an advantage that we are trying to put on our school systems. Put yourself in the position of being an administrator of a school system with a young person wanting to get out and getting out and then that administrator trying to force that person to stay there. Now as I said at the outset, I think Senator Beutler's intentions are pure. I think he really truly believes that raising the age is going to somehow magically cause these young people to desire to stay in school another year longer. But I can assure you that when I was fifteen years old, I am not sure I even knew what the state law was but I can certainly tell you that I didn't give a damn what it was, I was going to quit anyway. We can raise this age to forty if you want to but those people that want to get out are still going to get out. I don't think this is the answer. I suggest to this body that we should certainly not raise the mandatory attendance age. If we are going to go any direction, we should lower it. Personally, I think we should leave well enough alone. Thank you, Mr. President.

SPEAKER MARVEL PRESIDING

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I would like to defend very strongly because I feel very strongly that though this is obviously not the only solution to the problem or not even the most important solution to the problem, it is a piece that we have to fit into the puzzle. Senator Vickers says that his teachers probably rejoiced or were rejoicing when he left school and probably a majority of this Legislature would rejoice if he left the Legislature but I wouldn't suggest for a minute that that would be good for Senator Vickers or good for the State of Nebraska or for his constituency. The dropout rate, the dropout rate in the State of Nebraska is around twenty percent. We are giving up on one in every five students. Don't be confused by the statistics you see that say the dropout rate is three or four or five percent. They are talking about the dropout rate for the entire school system for one year. But for one high school class, for one high school class progressing from freshman year to senior year, by the time they graduate as seniors, twenty percent of them will have dropped out and the irony of this is that for the last five or six years the economic times have been good times, perhaps the best times in all of this century, in all of the history of our country. So the reason that they are dropping out does not have to do basically with economics. It has to do with attitudes, their own attitude, and it has to do with the attitude of society towards what they are doing. It has to do with our attitude with regard to what we say. Is high school important or is it not important? Is finishing high school important or is it not important? What happens when we blithely let students drop out from school? They go out and then this time of high economic unemployment, the highest we have had in years, they flood the labor market with more unskilled labor, with more unskilled labor when the one crying need in this country at this time is for skilled labor, for people with skills that they have learned on jobs or they have learned hopefully in school. And when they go out at this time of high unemployment and compete in that unskilled market, who do they compete with? They compete with the dropouts of three years ago and five years ago and ten years ago who are still in that unskilled labor market. These dropouts of three and five and ten years ago who are on that market but who really need those jobs because now they have wives and now they have kids, so in comes the high school dropout with no wife, no kids, takes the job from somebody with a wife and kids and all of a sudden we have three more kids on

welfare, all of a sudden we have somebody else considering a life of crime. The Chief Justice talked about crime today. He talked about illiteracy in our penal institutions indicating that those who commit crime generally speaking are the less well-educated and I suggest to you that giving someone technical skills as the Chief Justice suggested has some relationship to their ability to function in society and their ability to go through life in a constructive manner both for themselves and for society.

SPEAKER MARVEL: You have one minute.

SENATOR BEUTLER: And yet here we are saying it is okay to drop out. You know, maybe it is not such a good alternative to keep disinterested students in school you say, but you have to ask the question, what is the alternative. Do we want to say, yes, go out on the job market and contribute to the welfare problem, to the crime problem, to the unskilled labor problem? Is this what we want to say? Is this the statement that we want to make? I think it is not. Thank you.

SPEAKER MARVEL: The Chair recognizes Senator Lamb.

SENATOR LAMB: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I rise to oppose this bill and therefore I support Senator Vickers amendment from a different standpoint. I passed out a sheet I hope you will take the time to read from the Norfolk Junior High School. One sentence I will read. "Students who have developed a negative attitude toward school at age sixteen are not likely to become successful students during the extra year required by LB 305." I firmly believe that. I believe it is impossible to make a student stay in school and be productive, much better to let them go, do what they want to do, recognize their own mistakes, make their own mistakes. Then come back if they want to do it at another time. Impossible to force a student to do something he does not want to do. Senator Vickers indicated at age fifteen he did not want to go to school. At age fifteen, sixteen and seventeen, I was very much interested in school. From two different standpoints we see this bill in the same light, that it is not a bill that can do what Senator Beutler so earnestly wants it to do. He is mistaken. It is a bad bill. I hope you do not advance it.

SPEAKER MARVEL: The Chair recognizes Senator Wiitala.

SENATOR WIITALA: Mr. Speaker and members of the body, when LB 305 was on General File I supported it. I guess theoretically I agree with Senator Beutler's attempt to do something

about the serious problems that schools face when it comes to dropouts but on further consideration, when you think of the practical applications of raising the mandatory or compulsory school age to seventeen, I think there is a lot left to be desired. First of all, most school systems are having difficulties in forcing the compulsory age at sixteen, let alone raising to seventeen. I think most important, when we consider this issue, is remember the old statements you know that you can lead a horse to water but you can't force it to drink. I don't think the answer is going to be found in forcing students to drink another year of high school education. As a high school teacher myself I think the answer for retaining youth in our school systems is done through other less restrictive, more direct and personal means, such as, better counseling, better programs and curriculum within the schools so students find the high school environment attractive, better alternatives for those that have difficulties coping certainly with a large school system, more sensitivity to the differences among children. Raising the school age will not necessarily lower the amount of dropouts. I sincerely feel that the answer is found in each institution addressing the dropout problem in its own terms and doing what is necessary to reach out and touch that child's life. Thank you, members.

SPEAKER MARVEL: The Chair recognizes Senator Koch.

SENATOR KOCH: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I rise to oppose Senator Vickers amendment and Senator Beutler's proposed law. We heard the Chief Justice speak this morning. He talked about those who are incarcerated as being illiterates and that may be true but I would submit to you that other dropouts in this nation from the time of the beginning of public schools were not incarcerated but, indeed, as time went by availed themselves of educational opportunities and did succeed. I submit to you if you know the rule on mandatory attendance, it is up to the superintendent to notify the parents and advise them that they are guilty of violating a law which says that their child shall remain in school until age sixteen. If the parent is then unresponsive, it is then the administrations's job to report to the county attorney. The county attorney will then bring charges against the parents because of the fact they are disobeying the law which says you shall stay in school until you have reached your sixteenth birthday. That is the way the procedure operates. Senator Beutler is generalizing when he says that when you look at unemployment this is all due to dropouts. It is not necessarily all due to dropouts. They may be underskilled, that is true. But it was rather interesting last year when I had legislation here to try

to upgrade the vocational educational opportunities of this state, Senator Beutler was one of the first ones to rip it out. Now I submit to you the reason young people drop out of public schools today is because they can see no future. There are not enough courses being offered to take care of the different needs of children. They offer basically in many of our schools today a very narrow curriculum with no alternatives. I can show you some alternatives that some schools have adopted, one of them being the Lincoln Public Schools where they take young people because they have got social problems, they have got economic problems, they have got parental problems, they have got all kinds of problems, and they put them into a system and they recover them at a very high rate. That includes drug problems, you name it, a lot of other problems as well. I can show you a system where on the greater part of Omaha where I live we have an enrollment as high as three hundred and fifty students annually, these are potential dropouts and they recover eighty-five percent of them for diplomas and jobs. Now those are alternatives being offered by certain schools who are seeking to solve a problem and I submit to you if you want to solve the problem of dropouts, then this state has to go on record of doing everything we can to pay the cost of alternative school systems. That will be the solution to the problem. I also will submit to you today that seventy percent of our young people are working. Do you know where they are working? In fast food chain systems. That is where they are working. Some of them need to do this because they have automobiles they need to support or they need to support themselves or other reasons. For us to increase the age to seventeen is absolutely I think folly and we are going to offer the people something which we believe will solve a problem and it will not. Because when a child remains in school at a certain point, they become disruptive. They then disrupt the education of the others who are there for serious business and so as a result many times they will say, let them go. We will not prosecute. Yet they are evading the law when they do not prosecute. All I am saying if they don't prosecute today when a child doesn't stay until they are sixteen, they won't prosecute when he doesn't stay until seventeen. So our role here as policymakers is to help solve the problem of dropouts and that is by offering additional sums of money to the various schools so that they can offer the alternatives and the programs that are needed to help young people stay in school rather than trying to leave that school. I submit to you you go back to the dirty thirties you had the CCC, the Conservation Corp. You had the National Youth Program where they stayed in high school and paid fifteen cents an hour for some menial task that was provided

for them.

SPEAKER MARVEL: You have one minute.

SENATOR KOCH: But I submit to you today if I were a policy-maker at the federal level I would not diminish the dollars coming back. I would increase them and I would provide to those potential dropouts a stipend to stay and to get their school. I would offer them like we did as veterans, when we came back we were offered a stipend of \$90 a month, our books and our tuitions. We stayed and we achieved but yet that was the inducement for us to do that. And so those of us who had that opportunity today are in the mainstream and supporting the taxes that support our public schools, our governments or whatever it might be but that was done through a stipend off of the federal level and we as a state could do at the same level if we wanted to put our dollars behind it and say to the schools and these young people, you stay, we will help support you until you get your diploma and then we will help get you a job based upon your skills and we will find you a skill somewhere along the line. Therefore, I think for us to adopt either Senator Vickers' amendment or Senator Beutler's proposal is indeed sheer folly.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Cope.

SENATOR COPE: Mr. President, members, I call for the question.

SPEAKER MARVEL: The question has been called for. Do I see five hands? I do. Shall debate cease? All those in favor of that motion vote aye, opposed vote no. Okay, record. Shall debate cease is the issue. No, this is shall debate cease. Have you all voted? Okay, record.

CLERK: 26 ayes, 0 nays to cease debate, Mr. President.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Debate has ceased. Senator Vickers, do you wish to close on your amendment?

SENATOR VICKERS: Yes, I do, Mr. President. Mr. President, members, first of all, let me say that I am not in favor of doing anything that would cause more people to drop out of school in the State of Nebraska and I don't think keeping the mandatory attendance age at sixteen is going to do that. It is not going to increase the number of people that want to drop out of school and I need to also say that that is one segment of my life that I am not proud of. I indicated that earlier and I need to reiterate that. It is not smart and it is not cool to drop out of school. Education is very, very, very important. If I didn't believe that I wouldn't

be here and I wouldn't be on the Education Committee. Senator Koch also mentioned in his remarks that what we needed to do was look at alternative schools. I am on a committee that is doing that very thing. He also suggested that we are going to need to put some funds in alternative schools and that is certainly correct. He also mentioned vocational education. He will remember that I opposed his bill a year ago simply because I didn't think it distributed the funds quite fairly but he is right as far as the fact is concerned that if we are really concerned about helping young people we need to provide those subjects that will tend to keep them there and those subjects sometimes cost money. Let me just simply close by saying that what we are trying to do here is a noble cause as far as we are all concerned. We are all concerned about the problem of high school dropouts as well as we should be. I just simply suggest to you that raising the age limit, increasing the size of the club is not going to force those young people to stay in school because at that point in their life they are not afraid of that club. I can assure you, those young people out there that are thinking about dropping out of school could care less what this body does. We like to think that we are pretty important in here, but as far as those young teenagers are concerned, we are not important at all. They are more concerned about a whole variety of other things and I won't go into what they are concerned about but I can remember a little bit about what happened back when I was a teenager and I am sure most of you can and what took place in the Unicameral wasn't one of those things that really concerned you. I just urge the body to reject Senator Beutler's LB 305, and with that, Mr. President, I would ask unanimous consent to withdraw this motion.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Vickers, for what purpose do you arise?

SENATOR VICKERS: I would ask unanimous consent to withdraw my motion.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Hearing no objection, so ordered.

CLERK: Mr. President, in that event, the next amendment I have is from Senator Beutler.

SPEAKER MARVEL: The Chair recognizes Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I hope you will pay attention just one minute. I do want to offer a compromise. I do want to take into recognition the objections that have been made and the objections that

some of you have heard from superintendents, and I want to ask you to do this, pass 305 raising it to seventeen for a period of four years. That is one cycle of high school students. Give the age seventeen proposition an opportunity to work through one group of students and let's see what happens. Surely with a dropout rate of twenty percent every little thing that we can do to try to attack the problem is worth a try. You know, the administrators, they come in here and they complain. They don't want to deal with twenty percent of their problem, twenty percent of their job. I can't tell you how nice it would be for me as a lawyer to drop twenty percent of my worst cases. If all of us in our different occupations could forget about the worst twenty percent of our job, I am sure we all would feel a lot more comfortable, life would be a lot easier. But we have got a problem with crime, we have got a problem with welfare, we have got a problem with educating our public to the ever increasing complex technologies of our day and age, and we cannot, we must not say that we are only going to deal with eighty percent of the students. The superintendents, they want to walk away from their problems by letting their problems walk away from them. I want to make again a point that I made on General File. Our compulsory school attendance law right now does not literally force every student to go to school. That law has been enforced in a loose and in a sensible manner. But it is important I believe to make a symbolic statement. I do not mean to suggest that 305 is entirely a symbolic statement but it is in part a very important symbolic statement and the statement is this, that every person in this society is capable of a high school education and that every person in this society should obtain a high school education so that he can live life to the fullest and for the protection of our democratic society. I think that each and every one of you should put the question in personal terms. Do you have any kids yourself that you think should not have a high school education? I have never heard a parent tell me that about their own child. Senator Koch in his remarks admitted that the law is not prosecuted vigorously in this state which reaffirms what I am telling you, that those who believe or argue that this is going to force every kid seventeen and under into the schools, all the disciplinary problems to stay in the schools, that simply wasn't true for sixteen year olds and it will not be true for seventeen year olds. Nonetheless, to some extent 305 is not a symbolic statement but I think that it will, in fact, encourage certain types of kids to stay in school. What types of kids are there? There are those who are emotionally disturbed and disruptive, and with those, we must use special procedures. We

must have special places for them. We must deal with them on an individual manner. This bill has little or nothing to do with them but there are some kids who enjoy being in school but who get pressure from home to quit school. Their parents are tired of supporting them. Their parents don't understand the value of education. This kind of a law would help that student deal with his home situation. He can say and his parents will be told that the law of the state requires that he stay in school until age seventeen. And then I think that this bill helps address what I consider the most dangerous problem in our schools and that is a rampant materialism which pervades our adult society and which I believe now is becoming more widespread among the young people and that to me is very frightening, because if idealism exists anywhere in society, it should exist among the young. But what kind of values are we encouraging, a new car now is more important than being able to read well? I guess I hope he knows how to read the interest payments he has to make. A new stereo now is more important than gaining an additional vocational skill? Is that the long term kind of thinking that we want to promote in our young? A new TV now is more important than understanding the structure of government? What good is TV news if you have no background with which to interpret the news? A new dress now more important than additional math skills? I doubt it. I think that we need to make a statement about the values of our society and I think we need to make a statement to the young. I think one of the mistakes we made in the Sixties was to say to the young, you determine what is relevant, you determine what is valuable, you set the standards for adult society, and if that isn't backwards I don't know what is. And it is time for adult society to reassert its experience and to reexert the experience of generations before us, and that experience has been that the more education you have the better off you are, and I see no facts that have been presented in the discussion of this bill or that is being presented in the media today that would indicate that this truism is not now true also. So I would ask you to support the compromise to put it into effect for four years, and at the end of that time, the burden will be on me once again to show that the change was a good change, that the change had some effect on the dropout rate, that the change did encourage some superintendents to grab hold of the problem and do their part. We have to solve the problem at all levels at all times when there are adults on welfare, in our corrections systems, but, by golly, we had better start at the beginning, and we had better do the very best we can when they are young, and we had better start in the schools, and the superintendents have their obligation also to begin to help us begin. Thank you.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Goll.

SENATOR GOLL: Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I rise in opposition to Senator Beutler's amendment as well as do I rise in opposition to LB 305. I have gone to the people in the 16th District. I have talked to school boards. I have talked to school teachers. I have talked to administrators, and most important, I have talked to parents. And since this bill started its way through the halls of government, I haven't found one person that speaks in favor of mandatory compulsory education until they are seventeen. Quite truthfully, I don't know why the magic figure is sixteen. Maybe that is when we first get kissed or maybe we become sweeter or maybe we get that car license but I do think sixteen is when we kind of move from the teenage element to being a little bigger guy and a little bigger girl, and I think truthfully what we are dealing with is not the sixteen, what we are dealing with the twelve and the thirteen and the fourteen and the fifteen year olds. We are dealing with the truants and the tardy and the flunking and who knows what else. You know the pitiful part about this whole thing is that we probably should be dealing with the parents instead of the kids because in all probability they are the fault of the whole thing. And I don't think it's...I think we need not forget that the schools are nurturing these kids. They are trying to get them into music. They are trying to get them into athletics. They are trying to teach them something. When all else fails, they quit if that is what they want to do. And so we are not just dealing with a sixteen year old who suddenly wants to go out and get a job, buy a car, and, Senator Beutler, if they want to buy one of those new cars, I can assure you they better have plenty of money because that is what they cost. So the decision here is, do we continue to force individuals to influence, associate, and disarray those who are interested in their education. It is my opinion and it is the opinion of the people in my district and the opinion of many more across our state that nothing will be gained educationally. And I would like to read in conclusion the last paragraph of a letter that I received from a person who is interested in education. "Nothing, nothing will be gained educationally by passing this bill. It can only detract from young people who are trying to get an education." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Vickers.

SENATOR VICKERS: Mr. President, members, I rise to oppose Senator Beutler's amendment also. As we talked about a little earlier and Senator Beutler pointed it out, it is

a grand illusion that we nurture in here that we are going to solve all the problems as far as the dropouts are concerned by addressing the age situation. That would be grand if we could do it. Unfortunately that is not the case. But what Senator Beutler's amendment would do, it would say that those people, that for four years right now we are going to experiment with them. We are going to raise it to seventeen. Well, since I don't have any children in that age group, maybe I shouldn't care but I do because for those people, those young people that are in that age group, that would be caught in this grand experiment, we would be playing with their lives. We would be playing with the administrations of the schools, forcing them to do some things trying to keep these young people in school against their will that would disrupt everybody else that is going through school at that point in time. Now we might think all we are dealing with are those twenty percent or whatever of the individuals that are wanting out of school. That is not true because trying to force them to stay there is going to have a negative impact on all of the rest of the young people that are in school for those four years also. If you are in a class and you have got one or two or three individuals in that class that really don't want to be there and are being forced to stay there, even though their parents can't keep them there but the state is trying to force them to stay there, you can imagine this disruptive influence it is going to have on the rest of the class. So I don't think it would be fair, not only to those people wanting out, but I don't think it would...I think it would be extremely unfair for those young people that are really trying to get something out of those courses to put them in that type of a situation. As I indicated a little bit ago, the intentions are great but there are certainly other ways to address this situation than trying to do it this way and I would suggest that we have got a bill in committee that Senator Beutler originally introduced that would give an alternative to some of those young people that would be a far better solution to this problem than what Senator Beutler is proposing this morning.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Haberman.

SENATOR HABERMAN: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I rise to oppose the amendment. I think we've forgotten something. Let's educate instead of legislate, Senator Beutler, Senator Koch, Senator Wiitala. You are the people who are very close to education. Let's educate these young people to stay in school instead of legislate and mandate they will stay in school. I think we ought to start leaving the young people alone. Let's let them work

things out. It seems every year we pass bill after bill telling them to do this or do that or don't do this or do that. As far as putting this bill in for four years, the Legislature can change, the school can change, the economy can change. I don't believe in hamstringing the schools for four years and then changing the whole thing again. If it is a good idea now, it will be a good idea four years from now. If it is a bad idea now, it will be a bad idea four years from now. So I say this is no compromise, none whatsoever. Why four years? Why not two years, why not eight years, ten years? What is magic about four? What is magic about seventeen? So I say let's leave the schools, let's leave the school age the way it is, defeat the amendment, defeat the bill, and go on from there. Thank you, Mr. President.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Wiitala and then Senator Koch.

SENATOR WIITALA: Members of the body, I rise in opposition to Senator Beutler's amendment and also am in opposition to LB 305. To ask that we put a sunset provision on 305 to me is tantamount to begging the question. If everyone of us to advance one of our bills by putting the sunset provision on it that lasted for four years, we would all have it made in this body. When we take a look at the compulsory age and raising it to age seventeen, I think Senator Goll probably had a point in his remarks where he said that perhaps we should focus more on the role of the parents than on the recalcitrant youth. If we would make it mandatory that parents would drive their children to school and picked them up until age seventeen, I think we might have the disease cured. Now Senator Beutler says that every little thing that we do can help the situation but I am going to maintain that if you raise that age of compulsory education to age seventeen, that it is going to create a bigger mess than it is going to resolve. First of all it is going to cover up the school district's responsibilities to address that child's problem, either in developing a curriculum, giving guidance and counseling, or providing some alternative, and that is my biggest fear and the biggest question I have about compulsory age seventeen. I think we need to look for better alternatives and I am going to maintain that the school districts are able to force children to stay in their school until age seventeen the real issue is not going to be faced and that is why we are going to continue to have a dropout problem regardless of the age that we require students to be in a school. Again I would like to reemphasize the importance of presenting alternative schools for these children, special course, homeroom teachers that are interested in tracking them through their

courses to see that they have accomplished what they should have accomplished, deans and counselors that are willing to work with them during the school day or after the school day with their own individual problems as they grow up through adolescence, and developing a broad curriculum so students can identify with what a school has to offer. With that members, I rest my case. I hope that you would both oppose the amendment and the formal bill itself. Thank you.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Koch and then Senator Vard Johnson.

SENATOR KOCH: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, 305 is offering an opportunity to speak on the issue of education I think that not many of us should pass up. I will commend Senator Beutler for that. First of all, we talk about some things we legislate in here. We did legislate that every child who has a handicap shall be educated and we say it very succinctly. We also put about \$23 million behind that educational program but in here we do not put that same amount of money behind programs that would meet the needs of other students. I also remind you that it isn't just the student who is dropping out of school who may have difficulty with the curriculum. You have very bright people dropping out of school because they are absolute bored with the lack of a challenge that exists there. Now let's talk about accountability of the public schools and where we are today. First of all, lets you and I be accountable. We are state leaders and we are elected for the purpose of setting policy. Our inaction by our actions on finances I think demonstrates all we want to do is we want to espouse great causes but we are never going to offer a solution to solving the dropout problem. We never will under the present conditions under which we function because for some reason when we get down to fiscal responsibility suddenly that is where we want to turn our heads. Accountability, it all begins first of all with us and the Governor, with the taxpayer at your local school district level, with the parents who are the patrons of that level, with the school boards who are elected to serve at that level, with the administrators who are hired to produce a quality program, with the principals who are hired to supervise and develop curriculum, with the teachers and with the students, and you notice I put the students last because many times they are a part of a holding vat that they have no control over. I know in my mind today we could put students out in good jobs if somebody would let us do that but you have got to go through a certain number of obstacles before you ever get there. If I were a school administrator today I would tell you what the hottest thing would be in the curriculum, it would be computer literacy because the next twenty years that is

where the jobs are going to be. I don't care what you say, and the longer we defer computer literacy, not only for the student but for ourselves, the more ignorant we are going to become. We are going to fall further behind in terms of Japanese, the West Germans, and others, because they know that world. The other day in our hearings we heard Senator Wiitala's bill on foreign languages. Some of you may have read the novel recently called "The Tongue-tied Americans". Why don't we offer foreign language in the public schools? I will tell you why. The cost is too high. Yet we know, militarily, economically, and every other way foreign language could be of great value to this nation, and not only in our national defense but in every other way but there, again, it takes dollars. When we are willing to put dollars where our mouths are, then I guarantee you dropouts will take care of themselves. They will stay there because they know there is indeed an opportunity there of getting skill, whether it be academic, cultural or any other way. They will stay and they will be there and they will be successful. Therefore, I can't accept Senator Beutler's sunset for four years. It will not solve one problem.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Vard Johnson and then Senator Rumery.

SENATOR VARD JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker and members of the body, I rise to support Senator Beutler's sunset amendment because he offers the amendment in the hopes that the bill will have a greater chance of passage. He recognizes that his bill is fighting an uphill battle. Now why it should fight an uphill battle in a society that is dedicated to education and dedicated to the children is beyond me. This very morning we heard our Chief Justice talk about, talk about the need to provide money for legal service programs. We need to deal with poor folk, said the Chief Justice. I have worked in a legal services program for thirteen years and I have seen poor person after poor person after poor person and one of the common characteristics of the face of poverty in our society today is that a poor person dropped out of school at the age of fifteen, fourteen, sixteen, did not complete an education. Now at the age of twenty-five is living on public assistance, has got two or three children, and says, I don't know what life means, I don't know where I am going to go, and so as a preacher of some sort, I say to that individual there is always a chance to put your life back together, you can go for your general equivalency diploma, you can go into our tech schools, you can go into our colleges, you can take control of your own life and you can do those kind of things. But I shouldn't have to preach that message. That

message should be preached by us collectively. We should be saying to all of our children and we should be saying to the adults and the parents of our children, we expect those children to be in school through the age of seventeen. We expect those children to learn. We expect those children to become productive members of society. We know, we have enough collective wisdom now to know the importance of education for young people. We know that lives will be twisted and stunted and dwarfed if they do not obtain the education that is necessary to function in today's world. And how we can quibble over age sixteen or over age seventeen is absolutely beyond me because education is at the core. It is absolutely fundamental. Senator Koch suggests, Senator Wiltala suggests we can offer alternative schools but I can guarantee you that the public education community will not face the pressure of offering alternative education schools and alternative programs unless we tell the education community you must make space available, you must make teaching available, you must make services available to all children including the most troublesome of children, including those who are emotionally disturbed, including those who come from impoverished families, including those who are difficult to educate. You all know the pushout-dropout phenomenon. The pushout-dropout phenomenon is to take a young child who is having a difficult time in the classroom, who is creating a disturbance in the classroom, and only pray for the day when that child turns sixteen and he can drop out with absolute impunity. Is this the kind of society we want to live in? Or do we want to say simply to our parents and to our children and to our educators, our children are to be educated to be productive? We do know from collective wisdom what the needs of our children are. We expect you to do the job, and if you do the job, we will be there with the money, and we will be there with the encouragement, and we will not speak with a divided voice. Harry Truman had behind him in the Oval Office the embroidered statement "If the trumpet be uncertain, who will follow in battle", and is that not true for us in education today. If we cannot speak with a firm and solid voice, who really will care about the quality of life for our children and our young adults and future generations. I care and you care. I say support the Beutler amendment and move the bill.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Rumery.

SENATOR RUMERY: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, we have heard volumes on both sides of this issue this morning. Seems to me like it has been fairly debated, therefore, I call the question.

SPEAKER MARVEL: The question has been called for. Do I see five hands? I do. All those in favor of ceasing debate vote aye, opposed vote no. Have you all voted? Record the vote.

CLERK: 26 ayes, 0 nays to cease debate, Mr. President.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Debate has ceased. The Chair recognizes Senator Beutler to close on his amendment.

SENATOR BEUTLER: The amendment, once again, members of the Legislature, is essentially a four year sunset clause. It says let's follow one high school class from freshman to senior and see what the effect of the bill is. You know Senator Wiitala made the statement that you can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink. I guess it is one of those cliches that the Chief Justice was talking about this morning, cliches that perhaps bear a little closer examination. And I would add to that that if you don't lead the horse to water, he is never going to drink, and we need to make the statement that if you want to live, if you really want to live in this society, you have got to drink, you have got to be educated, you have got to have a minimal level of education. U. S. News and World Report had an article this week "Why Johnny Can't Count-The Dangers for the U.S." At a time when split second calculations of numbers are more important than ever, the fact that millions of Americans are stumped by mathematics is setting off alarms. As U. S. analysts see it, technological illiteracy poses a major threat to American economic security and national defense, et cetera, et cetera, the math gap now. I think that we have to be aware that society is becoming more complex. We have to be aware of the fact that the average person is going to be called upon to use computers in their home for their everyday life in the not too distant future. Every person in the society is going to have to have a basic understanding of computer symbols and I think we need to emphasize it now, and a part of the way we can do that is by making the statement to our children that it is important that you finish high school. Dropouts are headed for disaster. Everything we know tells us this is true, and if we don't do everything possible in the high school years to deter them from that road, then I think that we, as a Legislature, that we, as a society, that you and I, as individuals, are remiss. The other cliche that we heard this morning was the one about a stitch in time saves nine. I suggest to you that this bill will have an affect on hundreds of students, and that perhaps a stitch in time in this case will save hundreds from taking a course that we know they should not take. Thank you.

February 16, 1982

LB 230, 629, 666, 783, 788,
LB 305, 812, 813, 814, 858,
LB 862, 888, 919

SPEAKER MARVEL: The motion is the adoption of the Beutler amendment. All those in favor of adopting the amendment vote aye, opposed vote no. Have you all voted? One more time, have you all voted? Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: How many are excused, Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER MARVEL: One excused. Record the vote.

CLERK: 19 ayes, 24 nays, Mr. President, on adoption of Senator Beutler's amendment.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Motion lost. The motion now is the advancement of the bill. Machine vote has been requested. All those in favor of advancement of the bill vote aye, opposed vote no. Have you all voted. Senator Beutler. Record the vote.

CLERK: 14 ayes, 29 nays, Mr. President, on the motion to advance the bill.

SPEAKER MARVEL: The bill failed to advance. Senator Rumery has two constituents in I assume the North balcony, Corinne Jochum and Richard Lange. Would you please stand so we may recognize you? The Clerk has some items to read in.

CLERK: Mr. President, a series of items. First of all, a notice from the Speaker regarding the moving of LB 230 from Passed Over to General File.

The committee on Miscellaneous Subjects whose Chairman is Senator Hefner reports LB 629 advanced to General File; 888 advanced to General File with committee amendments, both signed by Senator Hefner.

Your committee on Banking whose Chairman is Senator DeCamp reports LB 666 advanced to General File with committee amendments attached. Signed by Senator DeCamp.

Your committee on Judiciary whose Chairman is Senator Nichol reports LB 783 advanced to General File; 814 General File; 919 General File; 788 indefinitely postponed; 812 indefinitely postpone; 858 indefinitely postponed; and 862 indefinitely postponed; all signed by Senator Nichol.

Your committee on Banking whose Chairman is Senator DeCamp reports LB 813 advanced to General File with amendments.

I have notice of hearings from Appropriations, Mr. President.

February 24, 1982

LB 604, 604A, 305, 335

SPEAKER MARVEL: The motion is the Cope amendment to LB 604. All those in favor vote aye, opposed vote no.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Dworak requesting record vote. (Read the record vote as found on page 836 of the Legislative Journal.) 38 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President, on the motion to adopt the Cope amendment.

SPEAKER MARVEL: The amendment is adopted. Senator Kilgarin, the motion is to advance the bill.

SENATOR KILGARIN: I move we advance LB 604.

SPEAKER MARVEL: All in favor of that motion say aye. Opposed no. The motion is carried. The bill is advanced. Senator Kilgarin.

SENATOR KILGARIN: I move we advance LB 604A.

SPEAKER MARVEL: All in favor of that motion say aye. Opposed no. The motion is carried. The bill is advanced. Under the next item, Select File, is LB 305. Senator Beutler would ask unanimous consent to pass over the bill. Is there any objection? Hearing no objection, so ordered. The next item is 335.

CLERK: Mr. President, the E & R amendments to 335 were adopted on January 29 of this year. At that time the bill was laid over. I am sorry there was an amendment from Senator Shirley Marsh that was adopted to the bill, Mr. President. There was then an amendment from Senator Landis found on page 490. Senator Landis.

SENATOR CLARK PRESIDING

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Landis, do you have an amendment?

CLERK: Senator, you had an amendment on page 490 I understand you wish to withdraw. Is that right? Okay.

SENATOR LANDIS: I have a later one that is to take its place, Pat.

SENATOR CLARK: That one is withdrawn.

CLERK: Mr. President, the next motion I have is from Senator DeCamp which was to indefinitely postpone the bill. He wants to withdraw that.

SENATOR CLARK: It is withdrawn.