

anybody would seriously say that we spend too much money on education. I do believe that perhaps in every educational system there is some fat, just like there is in anything else, that could be cut out and school boards and school administrators should cut it out. But to say that we can't turn this money over to local school boards because they are going to squander it, I think is not showing much confidence in your local people back home. Again I say I'm opposed to homestead exemptions because it gives more consideration for those people who are privileged to own their own homes. I oppose the bill. I also oppose the one cent sales tax for this particular purpose. I will support a sales tax if it is given to the school funds. Thank you.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Vard Johnson, then Senator Beutler.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, now come on, come on. You guys want to do property tax relief. You've told every voter in your district that you were going to do it. Now you can't do it if you sit and pick each bill apart until, in the end, you've got nothing, until in the end you've got nothing. You just go home to those voters and they'll have higher property taxes and you won't have done anything. Now I am not standing up here to tell you that LB 712 is the best bill around. But I've got to start to see if we can form a consensus on what should be done, and the first question I am posing to this body is, are you prepared to dedicate \$100 million to property tax relief through a dedicated sales tax? Are you prepared to do it? That is the first question. That is exactly what we are focusing in on. Now I know the form I want property tax relief to take. I'll make my arguments. I may lose it. If I lose it, I lose it. But I can't do property tax relief, and you can't do property tax relief until you first commit yourself to increasing taxes. I know that is a hard thing to say, but you've got to increase taxes to do property tax relief. Yes, Senator DeCamp asked if I could say it some other way. I suppose that the only way it could be said is if you could...you might be able to reduce the amount of money left in the taxpayers pocket. So you can think of this as a taxpayer pocket reduction measure. But the truth of the matter is we have to increase taxes to get property tax relief. The Revenue Committee has said let us look at the sales tax because the sales tax, in our state, is not terribly burdened. And in addition the sales tax in our state has been the most popular tax among the taxpayers.