

for that is to put a gun to all of our heads, I guess, to resolve this issue fairly and amicably and to continue the process of accommodation on forward. We found that the main reason we could not get an affiliation model past this Legislature this year was twofold. One, we had the opposition from the Class I's not liking the way in which we had drafted it in LB 940, nit picking the way in which, and I shouldn't say nit picking, they did have some, probably some fair criticisms of it that need to be addressed. But the main stumbling block to achieving a meaningful affiliation model this year was the fact that there are a lot of Class II and Class III school districts in this state that are reaping a windfall from the current nonresident tuition formula. Keep in mind, last year I was the one that stood on the floor and argued for LB 182 which submitted the current formula into statutes. I don't apologize for that. Given the facts we had in front of us last year, that was probably the right thing to do, but the underlying formula itself behind 182, and the bills that preceded it that actually set up the formula, I think is probably flawed, and until we address that, we are not going to have a meaningful affiliation model, and for that reason, I am saying that we should sunset the current formula. This was an amendment, a committee amendment on 182 that I argued in favor of voting down. The advocates of the Class I schools last year are the ones that says, please don't, please don't take away this sunset. We should sunset the nonresident tuition formula. I'm bringing that back this year saying that we need to do that to bring people back to the table...

PRESIDENT: One minute.

SENATOR WITHEM: ...to address the affiliation model so that we can get it accomplished. I believe what you have here with the Education Committee amendments is a statement by a group of people that say, number one, they endorse all of the hard work that the citizens of the state put into LR 180 this summer, all of the countless meetings, and discussions, and compromise, and give and take. They recognize that such a controversial issue as school district reorganization probably is not going to get solved in a amicable conciliatory fashion in one year. What we want to do is solidify those gains into the statute that were made through the 180 process and put in place those sort of things that will assure that this process will continue on, that we don't just pass 940 and forget about the issue. For that reason, I would ask you to adopt the committee amendments.