

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

April 25, 2001 LB 543

SENATOR CHAMBERS: ...in this Legislature.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Raikes.

SENATOR RAIKES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members. I've been a green light on this one and...and probably will continue to be and I wanted to join the conversation a little bit. We're talking here, with the budget of course, about tax monies. We're not talking about contributions. We don't go to people and say, how much would you like to give in payment of your taxes? Rather, it's a statement like, this is your obligation; you are required to pay this much as a...as your share of providing government services. Now, I think as a result of that people, taxpayers, expect the efficient use of those tax monies that we do collect, and I think Senator Wickersham has made a good point of that; that if we're collecting money from a person to provide a need-based scholarship, then we ought to try to use that money in the manner most efficient; that we ought to be able to try to provide higher education services in the greatest extents possible for that dollar collected. So another point I would...I would make in connection is that we've had a theme and a precedent of this state...in this state of separation of church and state, of separation of private from public institutions. I think that's a good idea. I think it's...it's a matter, really, of...of probably, it's probably a pun, but keeping faith with our tax-paying public. It's been mentioned in this discussion several times that we have only six-tenths of one percent, and I believe I have the number right, of our total higher education dollars go to private schools. My question is this. What should that number be? Should that number be zero? Should it be 10 percent? Should it be 30 percent? We've heard a discussion that a great number of graduates come from private colleges in the state. Should we allocate monies, tax monies, according to the number of...of graduates? Well, again, I...the answer I get is not really directly, well, what is our principle, how are we operating. Rather, it's, well, another state does this, or, another state does that. I think the real issue is, what should be the concept we're aiming for here? And, by the way, the Chambers amendment would not make that number zero. What it would say is that, in terms of allowing it to increase or the efficient use of those tax dollars, it