

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

May 13, 2003

LB 759

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Landis. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature, Senator Landis pretty much gave my speech so I will keep it very short, but I think there are a couple of short things worth reiterating. Senator...you may recall the Revenue Committee gap was \$355, \$355 million. Senator Brashear's bill, as it's presently constructed, has \$342 million. It's \$13 million short of meeting the Appropriations Committee gap just the way it is right now. And if you take out of the bill this particular item and I think we have a bit of a problem estimating how much the item is but I think it's fair to say it's some place between 17 and 25 million dollars, if you now take that out, then Senator Brashear's bill is going to be somewhere in the neighborhood of 35 to 40 million dollars short of the Appropriations Committee estimate. And as Senator Landis indicated, if that's where we should end up, then either you will exacerbate the property tax problem by taking money out of state aid here and there and everywhere, or you're probably...you may very well be hurting the poor more by the cuts that you would make in order to replace this revenue that you're not going to get. So I don't know if it isn't but six of one and half a dozen of the other as to in which manner are the poor best served. Given that and given the importance, in my opinion, of reaching the Revenue Committee's \$355 million figure, I don't want to see us create a bigger gap. In other words, I would hope you would not delete this item. I would hope you would not vote in favor of the amendment, but that we can keep it in, prevent further cuts to Medicaid and some other programs to the poor, prevent further cuts to scholarships for the low income. That would be a likely item that would be up, so the poor would be hurt there. On balance, I think we're probably on a pretty good course right now, especially when you then factor in the importance of fairness in a broad property tax base and the reform that Senator Brashear is trying to do. So I would hope that you would change your mind from the former vote and not exclude these amounts from the package. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Beutler. Senator Bourne, on the Preister amendment to LB 759.