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LB 407, 759

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature, I started to take an interest in if you...in the question of how poor people are best served. Do we do it by striking the tax on motor vehicles, which then would require us to find cuts at the level of 20 to 24 million maybe? Or do we not have the cuts and keep this in the revenue mix? And I went back, I was going back through the budget at things that are barely hanging on in the budget, probably the first things that would be cut. I mentioned the scholarship for low-income kids already and, of course, that's particularly tough in a context where the state colleges and the university for the last two years have upped tuition by I think about 10 percent every year, and they're going to up it again. Under healthcare, Kids Connection and other programs for low income, would...some of those would probably go if we had to do more cutting. Developmental disabilities, some of that would probably go. We may look at the homestead for the elderly, the aging programs are kind of on the edge, the public health aid, public health. The new public health agencies in the various counties of course are mainly directed towards universal health but more particularly towards low-income care. Early childhood programs, there are just a whole bunch of things that will probably go if we're...if we're going to cut \$20 million or so out of the revenue package. So I would just as soon, again, that we kept the car repair item in Senator Brashear's reform package. And I, you know, I did take to heart a little bit Senator Bourne's...despair is probably too strong a word, but dissatisfaction with not being able to look at LB 407 a second time before we made some of these final decisions. It's always the chicken and the egg thing. But my thought is simply this. If you...if you keep this bill in the form that can meet the Appropriations Committee package, then what you've done is said yes to what the Legislature has said with regard to the appropriations package insofar as we've gone so far. On General File there were no significant cuts to LB 407, which I think you either have to interpret as affirmation of the Appropriations Committee package or at least a neutrality at that point, since there were no negative comments. So my suggestion would be keep Senator Brashear's package in place, advance it to Final Reading, and by the time it comes around for action again we will have dealt with LB 407.