

how much money we have in the old pot. That information is not very clear. We don't know how much money we are going to spend. Now this Legislature instead of giving it back to the people may decide to spend this money in much more useful ways. We may decide to build a new building or we may decide to fund some new programs. But I want to try one more time to try and increase the credit in the right direction. I mean we are not going to get the \$32. We didn't get the \$30 and this amendment says we are going to try it at \$28. Now I know we can spend this money in other ways and there is a lot of people who are thinking about that. They are saying, boy!, this money could go into a really fine new program that I had thought up or it could really build that new building that I wanted out in my district or maybe it would go into some aid to local government formula or maybe this or maybe that but it really is the taxpayers money, and if we are going to use the credit to deal with the regressivity question, then we ought to keep that credit close to where it ought to be. Now this is going to be further away from close but at this point in time we have to do what we can do. \$28 is a compromise, not a compromise, \$28 is better than the \$26 that is being recommended by the Governor and by Senator Maresh. It is closer to being adequate even though it is woefully inadequate. For that reason I think this body ought to consider this very seriously. The taxpayers of this state, you know, are really, really, really upset. They don't like the sales tax on food, but if they are going to have to have a sales tax on food, they want it to be a little less regressive and the only way we can do that since we rejected the elimination is to try to keep the credit system up. \$28 will be woefully inadequate a year from now when it goes into effect because it is woefully inadequate today. It is \$4 below what it ought to be today. For that reason I recommend to this body that we adopt this \$28. It is reasonable. It will only cost the state 3 million additional dollars from what the Governor has recommended. \$3 million might come out of, a little bit out of this special program, this pet project, and this little deal and that little deal. You know, I think the Appropriations Committee can whittle away a little here and a little there to give to the taxpayers of this state. For that reason I strongly urge that we put away for the time being those little pet projects and give back to the taxpayers what is rightfully theirs. I thank you.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Maresh.

SENATOR MARESH: Mr. President, I call for the question.