

SENATOR VARD JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, it seems to me that when we deal with a very sensitive subject of veto overrides, it is important for us to get back to first principles, and the first principle that I look at in considering what is the significance of a veto override, if we look at our own State Constitution, our Constitution provides as follows: "Every bill passed by the Legislature before it becomes a law shall be presented to the Governor. If he approves, he shall sign it and thereupon it shall become a law. But if he does not approve or reduces any item or items of appropriation, he shall return it with his objections to the Legislature, which shall enter the objections at large upon its Journal and proceed to reconsider the bill. If then three-fifths of the members elected agree to pass the same, it shall become a law notwithstanding the objections of the Governor." Now the first principle here, in my opinion, is that the last word on law belongs to the Legislature. It does not belong to the executive. It belongs to the Legislature. That means we are the ones that have the final determining voice on what shall or shall not be the law of the state. Now what is the second principle that is important, in my opinion, at looking at a veto override? It is our basic organizational function, our basic organizational function, as all of us well know, is that this is a nonpartisan Legislature. It was created specifically to take out of the legislative process party considerations. This is not a Republican Legislature. This is not a Democrat Legislature nor is this an Independent Legislature. It is a nonpartisan Legislature. One of the unfortunate things that happens, of course, when a Governor who is a partisan officeholder vetoes a bill is that in some sense that veto politicizes that bill, and that means simply if we have a Democratic Governor, then it may well be that some members in our body who label themselves Democrats want to support that Governor because they are of the same political party, or if we have a Republican Governor, then some Republican members of our body may want to support that Governor on that veto because they are of the same political party, but under first principles, the Governor's party has no relationship to our nonpartisan function and our nonpartisan function in this context means that we have the last word irrespective of the Governor's politics and irrespective of the Governor's view. Now one of the things that you and I have not done this session is you and I have not really provided individuals any kind of direct tax relief. We have developed a relatively responsible state budget. We have developed some decent water policies, transbasin diversion. We have done some other good things