

March 24, 1982

LB 761

matter of making some choices. Are you willing to see \$2 million in federal funds dropped with no compensation from the state? Is Driver's Education that important to you? It has nothing to do with penalizing schools or penalizing poor people. It is a matter of tough choices. I submit to you that the economic situation is not going to be better next year, in fact it may be worse. The revenues are continuing to drop. We are not going to be adding money to any programs next year. Vocational Education is going to suffer badly. Is it worth it to you to keep Driver's Education in place and allow the Vocational Education to deteriorate? The insurance companies themselves are beginning to have doubts about the validity of Driver's Education. The study that I passed around to you was done by an institute that is funded by the life insurance companies so they themselves are beginning to wonder as to whether the net safety effect is really there, that is taking into consideration the benefits of having more careful teenage drivers, is that benefit greater than the effect of having large numbers of additional teenage drivers on the road? That is the question and there is a very real argument that there is no net safety effect. Besides, ask yourselves this question with regard to Driver's Education. Why is there a special fund for Driver's Education? There is no special fund for English. There is no special fund for Arithmetic. There is no special fund for writing. And those are far and away more important than Driver's Education. There is no special fund for Vocational Education except for the one fund that we are talking about and that is more important than Driver's Education. Why should we continue to fund in this Legislature in a special manner Driver's Education which is one of the least important of the school...least important items on the school curriculum? I don't think that the mechanism we have been using for Driver's Education in the first place is justified. And I would also mention to you that just because you are shifting this money to Vocational Education doesn't mean that the money is not going into driving or highways or related subjects. Automobile mechanics is one of the primary items on Vocational Education agendas. Automobile mechanics, wherever they have Vocational Education is one of the first items they pick up. So I am sure that at least \$1.3 million is probably going into automobile related Vocational Education anyway. So I don't think it matters where the money comes from. It comes from the general fund. It doesn't matter that it came from taxes on licenses in the first place, in my opinion. So those are the basic items. I am not...and again, I think you have to consider three different aspects of it. First of all, is Driver's Education a proper function of education?