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LB 761

indicate I don't know if it is in the Governor's budget any more or not, it was in his budget correct when the bill was introduced, but it is my impression at least, that the March 10th message indicated, at least implied a similar dollar amount that the appropriations committee had at that time, and they certainly had a list of what was in and not in the bill and at that time you will recall at least he made no indication that we were too low any place, and did suggest further cuts. So, I'm in no position to say that it is in or out of the Governor's budget but my implication at least it is no longer in. But I would urge again that you reject the amendment because of the cash problems we have rather than start up a new program this year.

SENATOR NICHOL: Senator Cullan.

SENATOR CULLAN: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I rise to support Senator Koch. There are a couple of points I think that need to be clarified. First of all this issue was litigated as Senator Koch mentioned and the reason that the key to the litigation is that these are grants to students. These are not grants of funds to educational institutions. On that basis the State Supreme Court indicated that students could receive financial assistance if the grant is to them and then they could elect what institution they would desire to attend. Therefore the money is in no way earmarked for any educational institution at all but the decision rests with the student, the money is not directed to private education at all. The second point is that this is really a matching funds, the SSIG program and if we are to qualify for those federal funds that are available in the SSIG program then the state must provide this match. So this will bring in additional revenues because the match. I would urge you to adopt this amendment. I think the program would have been in effect many years ago, but for the litigation and the funds were appropriated at one time and held up and diverted to ultimately I guess to other uses or lapsed back into the General Fund. So I think it is time the Legislature fund the program which it created several years ago. I see no reason that we can't do it now and this amount of funding was in fact recommended to us by the Governor. So I would urge you to adopt the Koch amendment.

SENATOR NICHOL: Senator Koch, did you wish to close please?

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