

November 5, 1981

LB 8

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Stoney would now move to amend the bill.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Stoney.

SENATOR STONEY: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, the net effect of this amendment would be to negate what the Legislature accomplished earlier this year. When we passed LB 207 which increased our participation in the Driver's Education Program in the Department of Education in Public Schools, as you will recall our participation prior to the enactment of this bill was approximately \$40 per student and with the change that was made in LB 207 that amount increased to a level of \$80. Prior to the time that LB 207 was enacted, the state's participation financially in this program was approximately \$800,000 and the funding required under LB 207 is \$1,459,000. So essentially what this would do would be to reduce the budget by some \$636,000. The addition that was made was \$686,400. Earlier with action that has been taken by the Legislature and by the Governor's recommended budget reductions, that amount was reduced to the present amount of \$636,000 which I am attempting to remove with this amendment. Now the rationale for doing this is that I think that it is the responsibility of every member in this body to identify areas where reductions can be made. We are facing, as everyone knows, and I probably need not repeat, very austere times as our economy reflects, and I have difficulty in justifying an increase to any one program that approximates 80 plus percent. Now I believe that Driver's Education is a good program. I agree that people will continue to participate. The net effect if this amendment is adopted is that the amounts that were being paid by parents of those who participated in the program last year might have to be reduced, or rather increased, to balance the reduction that we are making in state participation, but I find very little wrong with doing that. Philosophically I do have some difficulty myself knowing the problems that all subdivisions are facing in funding programs that they have to continue to offer in the public school system exclusively. It's not offered in the parochial schools, and these peoples' taxes are used to subsidize this program for only those students in the public schools, and there are other areas that I am sure that could offer the same training as effectively as the Department of Education does. So again I would ask you to consider...we are not reducing what people had formerly received in the way of funding for this program, but we are just not allowing an 80 plus percent increase in one program when we face the economic turmoils that we are at the present time. So I would ask that you