

tax relief is something that every member of this body, I would guess, has campaigned on. You have looked your constituents in the eye back home, you have heard them say that their property taxes are too high, the property taxes need to be relieved, and you have said, yes, you are going to support lowering property taxes. At the same time, we come down here and year after year after year we watch the situation get worse. LB 275 is a bill that the passage of will put this body on record supporting property tax relief. If it goes through the normal appropriation process, it is not going to be a useful bill. The purpose that those of us that introduced it, the purpose for which those of us that introduced it will be lost if we do not act on it early in the session. The idea is, (a), we have a reserve. Now the size of the reserve I know will be debated. Whether the reserve is committed to other functions I know will be debated, but you can't argue that we have a reserve. The numbers I see will be that we are going to end this fiscal year with an excess of \$250 million if you take the surplus in the General Fund, and our Cash Reserve Fund. That is not counting any lapses from General Fund appropriations. We will have that money left over at the end. The theory of 275 is that some of that money ought to be dedicated to property tax relief. What LB 275 does is it sets aside \$50 million of that reserve and places it into a property tax relief fund. There is no distribution formula in LB 275. The purpose of 275 is to pass it early in the session, set that money aside, set the signals that we want some dollars set aside to help with the property tax problem in our state. During the rest of the session, we can argue whether Senator Chizek's idea that it ought to go through state aid to education, or Senator Lamb's idea that it ought to go as a rebate, direct rebate back to property taxpayers, or Senator Chizek's other idea that some of us have signed on that a homestead exemption is the right way to go, we can make those arguments later on. What we are saying at this point though is that the money ought to be set aside and it ought to be set aside at this particular point within the session. You got some handouts, and I see you are getting some from Senator Warner that demonstrate the perspective from his point of view. I would like to point out to you what has happened in the area of property taxes in our state by a couple of handouts that you have. First of all, a rather long bar graph here, rather long-term explanation of what has happened to property taxes from 1974 or 1967, when our citizens were paying \$296 million in property taxes, up to this last year when we paid \$1,167,482,843.90 in property taxes. The map that has been