

SENATOR SCOFIELD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members, first I want to commend Senator Withem for coming up with such a unique scheme for giving us an opportunity to talk about an issue that I think is probably on the top of everybody's list of concerns. It doesn't surprise me that something abnormal and unusual comes from Senator Withem but I still think that it is an excellent opportunity to talk about this and we should do so. I think I want to reiterate something that Senator Warner said, and that is one of my concerns about this issue, this is a great chance to talk about this and to talk about this so that it goes out across the state to our constituents, but for all you folks who are covering this, I hope you don't write out there that 50 million does it, as Senator Warner has already pointed out. If we were to actually only do \$50 million in property tax relief, nobody is even going to notice it when they walk away from the courthouse. There is going to be a huge sense of disappointment in my district if this were accomplished because, certainly, my district has as much of a property tax problem as anybody. Some of my towns are much higher than any of these average figures that you see here. So, I am concerned about the message that we send out across the state, and it is important that we say, yes, we are committed to property tax relief, but it is important that we don't give anybody any illusions about what it is going to cost or how easy it is going to be, because from the work that I have done on property taxes, the more I look at it, the more I find out that I don't know, frankly. And the other thing that I learned is that it is going to take a whopping amount of money to really make a difference in people's property taxes out there which occurs to me that we are either going to have to do what Senator Warner says and that is find some new source that tracks the increase in property taxes, or we are going to have to significantly restructure our tax system or change who pays what. We are certainly going to see sales tax increase and income tax increase or whatever. I have told my constituents this every time I have spoken to them but I am not sure you can say that too many times. It seems to me that the other thing we need to do as a Legislature is to set some kind of goal about what kind of amount of relief we are talking about. Where do we want to end up? Otherwise, we could spend millions of dollars in the pot and just not get there. For a point of reference sake, I asked Eric Will of Revenue some time ago to help me put together some numbers, maybe try to start to set a figure that would be that goal, and I was astonished at the number he brought back to me. I knew it was bad. I didn't