

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Bernard-Stevens, a minute and a half.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body, I will be brief. One of the things that has been talked about, sending a message to the people, one thing that this bill does is send a message to ourselves. When we go on to our committees and we hear people come with their proposals, and good proposals they are going to be, asking for money to be spent to support an expansion of a program or a new program, one of the things today we can ask ourselves is...

SPEAKER BARRETT: One minute.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: ...mentally, are we just going to say, as we normally do in committees, yes, this is a viable program; yes, this is a good program; let's send it to the floor and debate it on the floor because it is viable? Or are we going to start today saying we are seriously looking at taking funds from general funding and putting it in property tax relief, with an addition of whatever we will do on the bill, which we will do? Are we going to take that first step today? Because if we don't have the courage in this body to take the first step today, knowing that we can make a better and improved bill as it goes from infancy to graduation, if you wish, on Final Reading, if we don't have the courage to do it today, how will we ever have the courage when the funding becomes spread out as it is going to be in all of the other programs? We are sending a message to ourselves,...

SPEAKER BARRETT: Time.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: ...members. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. The question before the body is the suspension of Rule 7, Section 3, subsection a. Those in favor please vote aye, opposed nay. A record vote has been requested. Have you all voted? Record, please.

CLERK: (Read record vote. See page 393 of the Legislative Journal.) 20 ayes, 21 nays, Mr. President, on the suspension of the rule.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Motion fails. Senator Withem, would you care to proceed, then?