

here in our Legislature. Right now, nobody is paying a whole lot of attention to what we're doing but what we're doing is adding, if this amendment goes on, an additional one cent on the cost of motor vehicles to go into the Highway Trust Fund. We also are going to, when the Appropriations bill comes to the floor, will listen to what their recommendations are on road construction. Probably without much of a dent in what they recommend to us, we'll approve that and the gas tax money will go up automatically to fund that. We never, on the floor of this Legislature anymore, have a debate on how much money do we really need to put into that trust fund? Is it appropriate to raise taxes on automobiles? Is it appropriate to raise taxes on gasoline? It automatically goes in there and I really wonder how many of you really realize that. When you vote yes on the Appropriations bill with all of the additional funds in it, you are probably going to be voting yes on a gas tax increase but it's so easy, we don't do that. I want to compare that with what we do with education. Everybody in here I have had private conversations with in the past have said how important it is that we get off the property tax base. Most of you...some of you disagree, most of you think it's important that we do some things to improve education. But whenever a proposal to improve our education system comes up, particularly elementary secondary, somehow the rules are we have got to somehow come up with the money. We've got to identify the tax source. We've got to be the ones that put the gun to our own head, politically, and raise sales tax or raise income tax or raise some other tax. I think next year I might visit with some of the people that got the variable gas tax bill passed, find out how they did it. Maybe we can get a variable education tax where all we do is come in with this amount of money that the educators think they need, it gets put into the budget and automatically the tax rates adjust to fund that. That would be a nice system. I am not raising this to disagree with what Senator Warner is having to say. The one time I differed with him on the specifics on the road proposal was back in the years when the budget was really crunched, we were crunching everything but roads and I thought that was unfair. It appears to me that there is adequate money for a number of good programs and putting this money into the Highway Trust Fund is probably a good idea. And I would support that if it came as an independent bill. What I am talking about though is I guess the relative ease with which we appropriate money into that fund compared with what we're talking about doing some things to improve the schools for our elementary and secondary kids in the