

\$200 million that would be used to offset property taxes. We have dealt on the floor with a number of issues, specifically LR 2CA, LB 361 and some other measures that have taken our attention away from the real issue that we face with property taxes, and that is the overreliance on property taxes for the funding of education. If it is the will of the body that we use LB 89 as a funding mechanism for education then we should do it at the level that allows for meaningful property tax relief. With this amendment you take care of the salary issues for the teachers, at the 1 percent level, you allow for real meaningful property tax relief in the neighborhood of \$200 million through the sales tax, and I think you get to the heart of the issue with regard to the funding of education. You say, do we want to shift, do we want property taxes to go down and pay for it in some other form or fashion? I mean that is the question you have to come back to every time you talk about property tax relief. Senator Schmit's amendment, I know, is well meaning and the funding mechanism is I think an amendment that we're going to see placed in a number of bills as they come up, that in order to have and allow for these issues, whatever they may be of substantive nature, they should probably all carry their own funding mechanism and that is a possible amendment that we may see on the floor as different bills come before the body. But what we are doing is we are I guess leapfrogging over the issue of the teachers salaries and we are taking it out of the realm of the budget. With Senator Schmit's amendment we are saying that this issue should not be included in the budget discussions, it should not be in there and vie for those dollars that are currently being brought in, it should stand alone and it should be paid for through its own funding mechanism. That is fine. But if we're going to do that I've not heard one member of the body who doesn't believe that property taxes are too high. I've not heard one member of the body say that that is probably not the chief concern or the chief issue in their home district, and that we have to address it by a shift of the funding from property taxes to some other form of taxation, whether it be LB 611 that Senator Moore has with the income tax, whether it be bills that Senator Schmit and I both introduce that would increase the sales tax 2 percent and have that relief go to property taxes. All we're doing here, and I'm sure that Senator Schmit will support this amendment because what it does is it allows for his proposal that he brought to the Revenue Committee and the proposal that I brought to the Revenue Committee to be adopted, basically, into LB 89 as it is before us today. The question, I guess, is do we use this as a vehicle