

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Senator Wesely. Mr. President, members of the body, in the minute and twenty seconds or so that are remaining of Senator Wesely's time I'd like to clarify a couple of things, if possible. I think a lot of people have been saying that the Legislature, you know, we're kind of like on an ocean. The ocean has been pretty calm, the season has been pretty good. We've moved along without any major controversy, but everyone is forecasting a major storm is brewing. The major storm, obviously, is going to be are we going to increase taxes in sales or other areas for property tax, are we going to use extra revenue funds and spend it...

SPEAKER BARRETT: One minute.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: ...on ongoing programs, are we going to use extra funds and get it off the table and put it in property tax relief? Those issues are coming and we've been able to avoid those for quite a while. But the storm is brewing and I think what we're seeing here in the Legislature is the first little impact, the first little wave, if you wish, of that storm. I think what the Legislature is doing is very reasonable and very expected as we begin grappling at these issues and they begin to merge with this particular bill. I, personally, will be supporting the Withem amendment because I think the Legislature needs to begin to put a track on which way it's going. Either we're going to increase taxes for this funding for the teachers salaries, or we are not and we're going to go general revenue fund, using the sales tax for something else in regards to property tax relief in another vehicle. I think we need to get to that choice, what are we going to do? If we're going to go sales tax to increase taxes for funding...

SPEAKER BARRETT: Time has expired.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: ...then we can do so by adopting the Withem amendment and we get a straight up and down vote on the Schmit amendment. We can then decide are we going to go sales tax for this funding, or are we going to allow the revenue funds to, as they come in in the General Fund, begin to handle LB 89 in whatever form it may take place. And the Legislature needs to take...

SPEAKER BARRETT: I'm sorry, your time has expired.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: ...a position on that. I would urge