

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President and members, the hour is late, I'm going to try to be brief. I would just like to comment. Again, I appreciate very much the work of the Education Committee and the dedication that has been demonstrated time after time by Senator Withem and his members in an attempt to resolve some of the problems of education. I appreciate very much the many hours of work that Senator Lynch and others have put on this bill. I want to point out that if there was any implication in my amendment that we were solving the problem of property tax by the addition of this amendment, I apologize. What I was trying to do was to do exactly what Senator Withem pointed out would happen, that you would stem the tide of increased cost to property with the addition of this amendment. I have in this body, somewhere floating around, a 2 percent sales tax increase which I think is necessary, if you really want to provide for substantive property tax relief. There are a number of other bills, Senator Moore has one. If Scotty's bill becomes law I'll personally lead a snake dance down "O" Street at high noon, because I don't think that's going to make the grade. There are a number of other meritorious bills here which have some qualifications, but which I think in all honesty are not going to be successful. I doubt very much that my 2 percent sales tax increase is going to be successful. I would like to think that it could be. I'm going to say this now, if you vote for this amendment and attach it to the bill and the bill becomes law, you will have guaranteed for the first time, I believe since I've been here, some funding for a program to aid excellence in education. You have done as Senator Warner has indicated, dedicated the money, that is something we do not do very often in this body, something which will make it more difficult for future Legislatures to amend the program, amend the bill and amend the funding. Many times we start on this kind of an escapade or this kind of a project with very high ideals, all too often they fall by the wayside. Most of the time they fall by the wayside because of a lack of funding. This is not...the Schmit amendment will not solve the problem of education, will not solve the problem forever of excellence in teachers salaries, will not solve the problem of property tax relief, but it is a step in the right direction and is a step in a manner which I believe makes it more difficult to be reversed, and one which you can go back to your people and say, no, we didn't solve all the problems, we didn't do everything we wanted to do, but we did something which, for the first time in a long time, ought to enhance education, ought to reduce the increase