

I am supportive of Senator Withem's efforts in this area, except I have a concern about the fact that if we eliminate Section 11 from this appropriation, this deficit appropriation bill, will we be taking the funding in any way away from what we are talking about doing, one way or the other, in the bill that you are proposing later on, four, something, or in 651?

SENATOR WARNER: No, Senator Smith, they are really...it is all an interrelated issue. The funds that were appropriated last time, it was a little over a million, about 1,270,000, have all been disbursed. So the only thing that is being done here in the reporting of the amount of SSIG funds that the state would indicate to the federal government would be reduced in this here to the amount that was distributed prior to the 750,000 that was added last year, and that was in the vicinity of 530,000, I believe. So we are not affecting this. What the amendment in the bill does, it would maintain that previous level of maintenance of effort at that 530,000 before money was added last year, which leaves the flexibility to the majority of the Legislature, whatever they decide on the distribution of those scholarships through 651 or some other, 468 or some other version. It allows that flexibility. If you strike this, because that means the effort is a three-year average, it would automatically come up to about 760,000 instead of the 530,000 that we'd have to maintain in the SSIG to be distributed under the provisions of 651.

SENATOR SMITH: All right, then let me ask you another question then, Senator Warner. Now are you saying to me that we would have to have this in here in order to get the federal or are you saying that this can be used however we decide to spend it, whether it is 651, or whatever that other number of bill is, four, something that you have coming up?

SENATOR WARNER: We are not affecting in any way what is currently done...

SENATOR SMITH: In other words, this has nothing to do with either...

SENATOR WARNER: ...because that is already disbursed. What the amendment does do is would allow the level of funding for next year to be adjusted to whatever the majority of the Legislature decides and the maintenance of effort requirement would be at the same level as it was before we added money last year.