

homestead exemption that we've enacted, repealed, reenacted and rerepealed, and now revived this year in LB 747. As originally introduced the bill reinstated a homestead exemption as it was enacted in 1984. That was a \$3,000 exemption from the valuation set on a homestead for the purpose of levying and calculating property tax. That exemption may not have been the most direct in real property tax relief of any measure that was before us. It is not siphoned off for other programs or other benefits. It goes directly and will show up directly on the property tax statement as a grant from the state to try to relieve the burden that presently is placed on homes. Now very simply we've heard a lot about property tax relief and the need for property tax relief in recent years. The homestead exemption is one of the ways and probably in my opinion the first and primary and foremost way of granting to that homeowner property tax relief to the taxpayer in general. It is targeted, directed and guaranteed property tax relief. By the way, colleagues, everything I've just said up to now is verbatim from the 1984 transcript. I've done that to point out to you that the problem has existed in '84, '74 and it exists today in 1989. The property tax problem was acute then, and I think we would all agree that the problem has not lessened over the years. That's why I was pleased initially when the Revenue Committee not only advanced the bill but amended the proposal to \$6,000. It is my understanding that that figure moves the exemption closer to what is considered real property tax relief. At 6800, colleagues, we are obviously closer. I won't try to pretend that 6800 is a precisely chosen figure for exact reasons. All of you know and have read recently it has been settled on as a part of the general compromise brought to you for your approval. Yet it is my hope that its route of birth won't overshadow its real value to the property taxpayer. Finally, and since I believe we know the issue well enough, I will note only the handouts I've distributed. One shows the average impact of the amendment in each of the state's counties. The other shows the battered history of the general homestead exemption. Its second repeal, in a 1986 special session, relates directly to the question of affordability. Affordability is again much with us today. There are different viewpoints on that, colleagues. Obviously it's the opinion of the Revenue Committee Chairman that it is affordable, that it is affordable. So the question resolves itself simply into two parts, which set of figures of surplus you subscribe to; and, secondly, whether this is an apt use of a part of the surplus by which I mean I feel is the genuine surplus that is available. I think this is bluntly the