

point person, obviously she suffered the most. Others of us have also. Others of us go back to our districts and we get bashed because of the income taxes. I would submit it's not because of the amounts that are in 773, or the amounts of income tax money that are being collected, it's more the fact that we told people we were not raising taxes, and taxes were raised. I would submit, if that is the political issue, no dollar figure in 739, you could put a zero at the end of this and make it \$180 million and return it to the taxpayers, and you're not going to buy back that popularity that was lost because we raised income taxes. We said we weren't going to, and it happened, we did. I think it was inadvertent, but we did. So we're left with the question then, what do we do with our surplus? And that's the real question you have to answer before you vote yes on 739 on Final Reading. Got four options, and they're not very complicated. We can either spend it on new programs, and we've got our share of new programs this year; teachers pay bill which, as you know, I'm a strong supporter of; indigent care, other items in the budget, the second year of the university salary increase, other things along that line. We can save it, we can put it under reserve, and that appears to be a recommendation we're getting from our fiscal office...

SPEAKER BARRETT: One minute.

SENATOR WITHEM: ...and our Appropriations Committee that we not spend that surplus all this year, that we save a lot of it, and we keep a lot of money in surplus because we may be getting to the point someday where we have another recession that we are going to have to cover. We can give it back in an income tax reduction, is what you are considering here today, or we can give it back in a property tax reduction, which appeared to be the strong desire of the Legislature this morning, or we can do a combination of all of those. Obviously, that is a possibility. I would submit that the thing I am hearing most from our constituents, all of my constituents are mad about the income tax increases, you ask them what to do. They don't necessarily say, give it back, they say, the real problem we have in this state is our property tax rates, and we are going to have to reduce property tax rates. Yesterday afternoon and this morning we sat ourselves on the road toward actually doing something about property taxes.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Time.