

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Landis, followed by Senator Abboud.

SENATOR LANDIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, let me outline my concern here and then see if this is the option we want to pursue or whether there are others. I like LB 84. It is a major appropriation of funds or a tax rebate as Senator Abboud wishes to call it. This year I'm persuaded we have the money in hand. Next year we may have the money in hand to do this program, but I do not want to get trapped into making a major appropriation and not then having the money next year to pay for this. Being in the middle of an election year when political courage, which is always in short supply to begin with, becomes illusory and microscopic. I don't want to be trapped with this big cost, lots of public expectation, no political courage for new revenues and then be forced to go back into the budget and rip out long-standing programs because we didn't take this opportunity to fund up front that which we and our constituents should be prepared to pay for. Tax transfers still cost money. Now, what I don't want to do then is to get into next year's election year, have us be nervous, have this expectation out there, want to continue to the program but can't find the means at hand to do so nor muster the political courage to raise the means to continue the program and thereby trigger some ripping out of programs in the budget. On the other hand, it would be possible in my estimation to do not a half cent sales tax increase next year, but to limit LB 84 for one year. It's a notion that Scott Moore suggested to me this morning and I think it's reasonable. What would that mean? We would pay for the bill with money in hand and we've got it. Next year if the public continues to support the idea, was pleased with our work, saw that LB 84 meant real property tax relief for them, wanted to see the continuation, we could make one of two judgments. Number one, do we have the money in hand? Number two, if we don't have money in hand, let's raise taxes to pay for it. This is the one and only agenda that I can think of that the public would, without major objection, support the raising of taxes for. For that reason I don't want to separate this issue from the raising of revenue. If they're not packaged together, our public understanding goes down, the tax transfer idea is broken and we don't reinforce the notion that this is a tax transfer and that, frankly, we isolate what has always been a difficult thing to do and that is raising taxes to have all of the down side of doing that and none of the