

to retain the flexibility that state funds are distributed as the state sees fit to do it even though it may be the same as the federal but it ought to be as the state sees fit to do it, not to be controlled by what the federal government sometime in the future does or does now.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Hall, please.

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Mr. President, members, I rise in support of Senator Withem's amendment to LB 812. The bill that he mentioned that deals with clarifying language that is currently in statute with regard to the SSIG program was a bill that I brought before the Education Committee. The issue here is one of whether or not we follow the statutes or whether or not we change the statutes in the way that the distribution is to be made. Senator Warner talks about traditional distribution and he's accurate in that. But, traditionally, what has happened is the statute has not been followed. Traditionally, we have ignored the fact that the distribution was to be applied as the statutes laid out with regard to the requirements that the federal government have for the SSIG program. So, traditionally, we have ignored our responsibility and what we have is two bills, one mine, one Senator Warner's. Mine says we're going to clarify the statute so that there is no misunderstanding with the Postsecondary Education Commission with regard to how these funds are supposed to be distributed. Senator Warner's would change the statutes so that what had been taking place, traditionally, would become law. So, in other words, we were not following the law with regard to the distribution of these funds so let's change the law. Rather than say, why don't we follow the law because we put it there for a reason, it's there so that the distribution formula is required, is met and that it follows the federal guidelines. If we had no difference between the distribution formula or how the money is going to be allocated, and there will not be in terms of probably the type of students with regard to receiving this money, then why set up another program? Why have the second program if there is virtually no difference, if there is no difference in how this money is going to be distributed? The students that it's going to go to, why have the second program? No need for it. No need other than we don't want to meet the federal requirements. We don't want to be told how we have to spend that money or who it should go to. What are the federal requirements? The federal requirements are few and very simple. There are three. They say that you have to include students