

dangerously close to here as far as making choices. One of the things that is interesting that happens in the committee is when we start to add things into the budget and we run those totals, and then we get to a level where we think we are in trouble, we go back through and do that very difficult sorting process, and every one of us finds ourselves making choices, not between something that has a higher priority and a lesser priority, but things that, in fact, look to have an equal priority, and you still have to do some kind of sorting and prioritizing process. The difference between that process and what we are doing out here on the floor now is, unless somebody brings a subsequent amendment in either to cut something or to increase the taxes, is that that sorting process now goes to the Governor, and so we may, in fact, be sending the Governor a series of issues that I think abdicates our responsibility as a Legislature to make choices, and we want to start thinking about that. And I am in no way arguing against the virtues of giving help to the elderly and keeping them in their homes. That is good policy and it makes sense, but while we are supporting the elderly, I would like to also remind this body of another group that I mentioned earlier in my first comments and that is the kids in this country, and we have not done anywhere near as well by children in this state, in my opinion, as we have by the elderly, and I would guess if we went out and talked to all those senior citizens, they would say, yeah, take care of me but take care of my grandkids, too. So I would suggest that it is entirely appropriate that we also weigh the virtues of doing in-home care and community-based services for kids, that we do more for children at risk than we have done, and I am not advocating here that we should pit one generation against the other, far from it. We need to think of a balanced way to approach both. I think we did a pretty good job of a balance with that 10 percent increase that the committee did. If you choose to support this, however, I hope you make a commitment across the board to treating kids as well as we are treating senior citizens here and that you will support the necessary dollars to do that. Now I don't know if you are talking about increasing tax rates across the board. I just read a study here awhile back about state trends in funding human services. The key to that probably doesn't come as any surprise to any of you is a balanced tax policy that generates enough money to take care of those things, but we may be, in fact, taking that step down that road to limit some of our options in terms of the income tax bill that is out there which, frankly, I think I would be willing to make the choice to fund both senior citizens and