

Committee, let alone Senator Hannibal, would look at this as a windfall for private schools, it clearly is not. The issue here is students and do we want to help students, not private schools. This is not going to help...And I have to disagree with Senator Rogers because this program is not going to keep one private school open. But I'll tell you what it has done, just the fact that this issue is before us, it's being debated. The Supreme Court gave it an affirmative response with regard to constitutionality. The fact that tuition tax credit bill is out on the floor, even though it's not on the agenda, it is out on the floor, the response has been overwhelming, because what has happened is that private school students and private school parents, even though we're talking about not even together, combined these two programs half a million dollars. They have been recognized, for the first time, in a positive manner by the Legislature and committees of the Legislature. And I can't tell you the impact that that has had on those people. The number of letters that it has generated just to my office alone, and I'm sure to many of you, has been overwhelming, because it is an affirmation that they are a vital and integral part of the education process of this state. We've recognized them. The dollar figure means nothing. The fact that we've recognized that they're out there, they're doing an outstanding job of educating kids,...

PRESIDENT: One minute.

SENATOR HALL: ...and that we recognize that through a very small, very small effort on our part, but one that I think is very, very needed, I could be real crass and say you can buy us cheap, you know you can buy is real cheap, for 150,000 in this program, tuition tax credit program that won't even run 350,000, you could buy off all 37,000 private school kids for less than half a million dollars. But I'm not going to be, because...and I could offer an amendment that would have reduced this dollar and maybe reached a few people, but the fact of the matter is it's principle over dollars at this point. And I think it is time that the Legislature, after 18 years, recognizes, 18 years on this issue alone, recognizes the importance that private education plays in our overall system. We recognize it in our transportation, we recognize it in our special education, it is not something new. But we ought to recognize it in a small way through the loaning of textbooks for kids,...

PRESIDENT: Time.