

\$18 million that are going to go back to general operations. They have got other salaries other than teachers. They have got staff. They have got general operations books, everything under the sun that they need to make those schools run. We have addressed the university. We have addressed state colleges. We have addressed a lot of other areas. The ones that we have left out and forgot has been state aid to education and this is the \$18 million that would finally fill out our final choices. And this is going to allow us some choices that we can make. And I would offer it to you. I think most of you have seen the state aid to education proposals before but, quite frankly, if we don't do it this year and make the choice this year, if we don't have the money next year, we're not going to fund them, simple as that. That's the way with a lot of projects. The economy, everybody says, is going to take a downturn. What are we naturally going to do? We're going to tighten our belts. But this is the one year and in normal circumstances everyone of you would say if it wasn't this year, let's go for state aid for education, give that money back to those local people and let them run with it because that's what we want to do. And, in theory, that's what we always have done in this body except for this year. And state aid to education has been one of those things we have left out and I believe the 18 million becomes the best alternative that we can do. It's one that, obviously, many of us want to do in some manner or another. I'm not telling you that we should take away from any other bill. I'm telling you we should put it directly in. It uses the current formula. I have not passed out the amendment but it's a rather simple one. It still maintains the same formula that we have always had, the 72 percent. And I will urge you to adopt this amendment and give back to those school districts what crumbs we can, but, quite frankly, they need this money just to stay even and through the budget cuts in the prior years they have not been able to keep pace and this is the one area of education we have left out and I think we ought to address it now.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. I understand, Mr. Clerk, that we have an amendment to the amendment but before we do that, may I introduce some guests of Senator Kristensen, please. In the north balcony we have 45 fifth and sixth graders from Kenwood School in Kearney, Nebraska and their teachers and principal. Will you folks all stand and be recognized by the Legislature. Thank you for visiting us today. Mr. Clerk, the amendment to the amendment.