

things for the writers and for the press and so we can stand up and be real tough. But you know what we're here for really is to make some choices and some decisions and I don't think it's a fair characterization to say that the schools came in on the 85th day or whatever and just all of a sudden laid the egg of state aid for education. In fact, I think they've had a bill up for some time that was before the Appropriations Committee that had a rather large public hearing and had some rather lengthy debate and these aren't new issues. These aren't surprises that just dropped in. These are schools and institutions that have gone without an increase since 1982. I don't know of any other group, institution or school that has gone that period of time. And I think it's unfair that if people are going to start to attack Senator Lynch and his bill to pay teachers, that's a worthy cause and that's one we've endorsed and that's one I hope that we pass. And I don't want to see the money taken out of here, taken away from that bill because I truly think that there are the funds here to do that. Now that may be that we're going to have to rearrange some of our other spending priorities, but that's what we're going to have to do. But quite frankly, if you don't put this aid in, you're taking away one whole choice and that choice is to give some aid back to schools and those are the exact institutions that we all sent up and talk every day that we want to help and they've gone a long time without any of that increase and all I'm asking, I think all the body has said is let's put them up for the table and make our choices. Quite frankly, if we don't, we're going to foreclose that choice. And with that, I would not agree with the motion to reconsider. I'd urge the people to maintain with the amendment that we passed earlier this morning. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Withem, followed by Senator Bernard-Stevens.

SENATOR WITHEM: Senator Barrett, members of the body, this is probably one of the toughest speeches that I have given on the floor of this Legislature since I came here for a couple of reasons. First of all, I'd like to apologize to Senator Kristensen who I think has done a fine job of arguing the merits of this amendment, but I don't believe it's one that I can continue to support. I am deeply, personally troubled by my actions on this amendment to date because I don't think I've really been honest, either with myself or with members or with some other people outside of the lobby by saying that I think we can do all of these things. I really don't think we can do all