

going to have approximately 1.3 billion dollars in our General Fund. I think we can talk to different people, probably talk to 49 different senators and get a difference of opinion as to how we ended up with this large an amount of money in our General Fund. Now this amount can be spent in a number of different ways and I think there are appropriations in budget setting process that we've had on the floor the last couple weeks. We have thoroughly discussed the multitude of ways of spending the additional revenue that is coming in this year. There's also differing reasons probably why people are supporting LB 84. The 98 million dollars that are going to be provided back to the homeowner and farmers throughout this state through a homestead exemption have different reasons for support among the body. My belief was that, as a result of this large general funds that we do have at this time this year, I came into the session hopeful that we could return this money back to the taxpayer. It was my opinion that it didn't make any difference as to how those funds would be returned to the taxpayer. That could be through the income, sales, or through property tax relief, which I hear quite a bit about back in...when I'm out talking to people in the district. It's my thinking that this 98 million dollars is a one-time shot. It's a one-time rebate back to the taxpayer. There may be this money next year, but there probably will not be that money this year, and unless we keep that 98 million dollars as a solid, intact piece of legislation, that if we peel off a portion of it, 30-40 million dollars, that money will be spent. There is one thing that I am assured...that I feel assured of, and I'm sure all of us do as well, that by the time we adjourn or soon thereafter, by the time the Governor gets the budget, we will have a balanced budget. We will have a constitutionally balanced budget. The question will be as to how those funds will be spent in order to balance that budget, and I feel that that 98 million dollars should be returned to the taxpayer and I believe that that money should be returned to the homeowner to return the homeowner some property tax relief this year. It's a sizable amount. It could be more. It could have been 200 million. But, unfortunately, political...politically, it could not be done because of the spending that we've been involved with. Ninety-eight million dollars is doable and 98 million dollars should be the amount that we return to that taxpayer, not a penny less.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Chizek.

SENATOR CHIZEK: Speaker, colleagues, I rise to oppose Senator