

education. Senator Hefner, I'm going to ask you to go back and look at the record, I'm sure that there are many times since you and I have been here that I have been on the side of state aid to education increases when you have not been. And we need to do a lot more in the area of general state aid to education. That's why we, as a Legislature, hopefully, are committing ourselves to Senator Scott Moore's bill and the process that it involves. But to put \$20 million of state aid to education, in general, blow it out into the wind, \$20 million into a billion dollar system and not have any strings on it is not going to do one thing for quality education. And the comments that Senator Lynch and Senator Baack made yesterday about administrators and their abilities to lead in education reform in this state, with some very notable exceptions, I will admit, were accurate statements, that this \$20 million into state aid to education will do nothing for property taxes...

SPEAKER BARRETT: One minute.

SENATOR WITHEM: ...2 percent of the entire burden and will do nothing for quality education. On the other hand, using this \$20 million to set up a program that says we, as a state, value quality people in the teaching profession, we know that that is where the action is and we know that if we continue to only encourage the bottom 50 percent of our college graduates to go into education, this state is at risk. We are in great danger of losing whatever competitive edge we may have as a state. That's what this bill is all about and that's why this money needs to go into LB 89 formula to benefit teachers, whether you like the formula distribution or whether you don't, it needs to go into teachers' salaries, not into state aid to education. State aid to education is a good program because the state has some responsibilities there but it doesn't buy you one nickel's worth of additional quality. And I defy a school administrator, a school board member to prove to me where that \$20 million is going to improve quality. They couldn't do it on the floor yesterday, they can't do it today. This bill needs to pass in its current form.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Bernard-Stevens.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members of the body, I would like to touch on maybe a little bit different area on Senator Nelson's amendment. And, again, as in yesterday it's very, very difficult because I, personally, have been a