

you adopt Senator Nelson's amendment, this money goes to the schools. It goes to the school boards and those school boards make a decision on the local level as to how the money should be spent. It can all go for teachers' salaries. It can all go for books. It can all go for some other facility that's needed but they are the ones that should make the decision. We should not be making the decision on the floor of this Legislature what is the best for every school in the state. It's erosion of local control and I believe that's bad. We have good schools in this state and that's primarily because we have good teachers and we have good teachers because we have good school boards. We have dedicated people almost in every case. Who are the people serving on the school boards? They are the parents of the children. I served on the school board for a number of years, first a Class I, then the Anselmo-Merna school board. When did I get off? I got off when my last son graduated from high school and that's ordinarily the way it works. Those people serve because they're interested in their children. They're going to do the best thing for their children. Whether it's teachers' salaries, whether it's something else for the school, you can trust those school board members to do it. So let's give them the opportunity, send the money to the school boards instead of sending it directly to the teachers and let them do the best job. The most complaints I get when I talk to school board members is the fact that the state mandates too many things, they do not have enough local options and I agree with that assessment. I think we're carrying it farther with this bill. This bill should not go in its present form. Senator Nelson's amendment is the way to go.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Warner, please, followed by Senators Hefner, Schellpeper, Rod Johnson, Smith.

SENATOR WARNER: Well, Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I rise to oppose the amendment which is a shift for me too that I made a few...two or three weeks ago now, I guess, a month, because I have always subscribed to the theory of general state aid as the most likely. But, as I indicated earlier, I have also been intrigued with categorical aid because one thing that you can do with categorical aid is you can identify where it goes. You can identify what it does and you can separate the responsibility that the Legislature or the state has and the local school district has with categorical aid where you cannot separate it as easily, perhaps you don't need to, but nevertheless you cannot identify it as readily when it's