

We appropriated a sum of money last year that we hoped would take care of that. We found, and this should be something we're pleased with, proud of, that the number of counties out there that are very serious about looking at their reorganization plans is much, much greater than we had ever anticipated. You have on your desk a list of those organizations that have requests still pending, Thayer County, Johnson County, Dodge County, Brown County, Garden County, Butler County, Jefferson County and the list goes on down through Box Butte County and Pawnee County. These are all counties that have gone to the Department of Education and says we take the charge you legislators gave to us last year very seriously. We want to do a thorough study of reorganization within our counties. The department, the money we appropriated to the department last year was not enough. It has been exhausted. To accomplish this they need another \$30,000 this year and another 15,000 the year after. On General File on the budget bill this amendment was added by a unanimous vote. Senator Warner stood and spoke on behalf of it. No one stood in opposition, no one voted in opposition. As I remember Senator Bernard-Stevens who had just fought his aquaculture fight very severely was somewhat dumbfounded by the fact that there is absolutely no opposition to this because we all felt I think it was important to honor our commitment that we had last year. For some unknown reason, and I state unknown reason, the Governor chose to line-item this particular item out of the budget. I visited with two of the Governor's assistants out in the Rotunda and asked them, what's the rationale? What was the rationale for taking this money out? They could not give it to me, but they assured me when I talked with the budget director that the budget director would be very sure that he would...they were very sure that the budget director would be able to give me the rationale. I approached the budget director. First of all, he denied that it had been vetoed. He said, no, that wasn't vetoed. And I said well it's on the list. So he said he'd check. He checked, and he came back with the reaction that well because the state budget had grown by some 25 percent, and I don't know what that means, that they took this out. Well it didn't have anything to do with the Department of Education, Department of Education's budget didn't grow by that amount. He also said that they figured that the task force on school financing could handle with this. Well that doesn't have anything to do with school reorganization. The two programs are totally unrelated. It's a scary fact, ladies and gentlemen of the body, that they didn't know what they were doing when they took this money out. The budget