

Senator Lamb's amendment?

SENATOR WITHEM: Yes, I would. I very strenuously object to the Lamb amendment to the point where I do not...to the point where I think that this amendment would take the heart out of what, at the committee hearing last year, was a concept that had widespread agreement. I'm not going to say, and if I've led any people to believe that this committee amendment has 100 percent, unanimous support, I misled people. I have not done so purposely, and I think I've been fairly clear in indicating that there are still some people on the fringes who object to...not in the Legislature on the fringes, but outside of the Legislature on the fringes who do object to this particular approach of the tax equity committee amendment. But this is really the heart of those folks that have been telling you that they support 259 in its current form, this is what they're talking about. If this amendment goes on, the battle will be waged quite royally and the support that is there for a resolution to the issue, quite frankly, will be gone. If you want to resolve the issue amicably, I would suggest not supporting this particular amendment. If you want to see the fight on mandatory school district reorganization reopened, then you may want to support the Lamb amendment. I would point out a number of things, particularly Senator Lamb talked about an original compromise. I'd like to point out, I guess, to the body that what is in LB 259, as it was introduced in the green copy, very similar to what I introduced in 940 a couple of years ago. I was supportive of that idea at the time. I would have liked to have seen 940 pass in its original form. Had it passed in its original form we wouldn't be here today. But the NSIA, the Nebraska School Improvement Association stood on the sidelines and would not accept 940 at that time. At the same time the Class II's and III's, who were out there, who saw that they were going to lose dollars under that bill, would not accept it. We couldn't get the votes to get it out of Education Committee because of the opposition at the end. The heart of the compromise, as I see it, is the fact that in 1994 we're going to move to a situation where there will be no tax advantage for continuing Class I schools. For years we have had people come in front of the Education Committee and say, why are you always picking on us Class I's, we can't help it if we live in a situation where the taxes are different. We're willing to pay the same taxes as people in the adjoining districts, just let us keep our schools open. That's what this bill does, it lets them keep their schools open. I genuinely want to do that,