

of the total value of property, 50 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation. We have property taxes in this state that are \$3.50 to support education. The system is broken. We are facing a legal challenge. There are some farmers from right around the Lincoln area that are taking a case into our court challenging our education system. These types of things have been very successful in states like Kentucky, like Texas, like Montana, other places. We have, if we don't do anything this session or pass something with an emergency clause next session, we don't have a school finance system. We, as a Legislature, conscious of what we were doing, committed ourselves last year to a change. We passed Senator Scott Moore's personal priority bill, LB 611, committing ourselves to a change in the way we finance education, because if we leave here this session doing nothing, the gun is really at our head. We have to come in next year and pass with the emergency clause a measure or we don't have a state system for funding education. What we need to do today is we need to question this proposal. We need to dissect it. We need to be comfortable with it. We need to debate it. We need to understand it. We need, still, I will admit, we need to modify it. We need to continue to mold it. We need to create a bill that we are comfortable with, but we, as a Legislature, do not have the luxury of doing nothing. This bill is the result of a lot of compromise already. It doesn't solve all of the problems in education. It doesn't purport to. It doesn't solve all of the problems with our property tax system. It doesn't purport to, but it takes a major swath down the middle of those problems that are out there. As the debate goes on, if you have questions about the bill, Larry Scherer is here. I believe we have the people from the Department of Education out in the rotunda, Tim Kemper, Polly Feis, other individuals from the Department of Education. Ask your questions. We want a full debate on this bill. Committee amendments are in and of themselves relatively innocuous. Most of them are clarification amendments. An explanation has been handed out. They have been printed in the Journal. The major change, the major policy change that is connected in the committee amendments involves a hold harmless provision. A number of school districts that receive less state aid as a result of this bill than they do currently said that their concerns needed to be answered. At the committee hearing and at the statewide teleconference we had, there was a plea that we not have as a result of this bill, at least in the first year, any school district receiving less state aid. What the committee is doing is suggesting a phased out, hold harmless amendment, 100 percent less aid the first