

SENATOR LABEDZ: The house is under call. All those unauthorized on the floor, please leave the floor, and all senators in their offices, please return to the floor and record your presence. Senator Bernard-Stevens, would you please record your presence. Senator Peterson, Senator Pirsch, would you please record your presence. Senator Owen Elmer, would you please record your presence. Senator Wesely. We are looking for Senator Scofield and Senator Peterson. Please return to the Chamber, the house is under call. Senator Haberman, would you return to your seat, the house is under call. Senator Hall, did you request a roll call vote? Mr. Clerk, proceed.

CLERK: (Roll call vote taken. See page 1509 of the Legislative Journal.) 22 ayes, 20 nays, Mr. President.

SENATOR LABEDZ: The amendment fails. We are now back on Senator Hefner's amendment. Senator Withem, on the Hefner amendment. The call is raised.

SENATOR WITHEM: Yes, Mr. President, and members of the body, when Senator Hefner brought this amendment to me this morning, it seemed to be a small, rational thing to do. It does, and to correct some of the comments that were made on the floor about the previous amendment, it doesn't count students simply who live in public school districts for the purpose of giving dollars to the public school system. It only counts them to the extent that they are served by the public school. I think that is one keen distinction. I did vote for the last amendment, though, because I think Senator Hall maybe tweaked my conscience a little bit on the whole question of how we deal with private education in our state. I think LB 346 is one way of doing that, to give a recognition to the fact that public schools, the public school system is served by having a competent, capable, well-funded, well-financed private system out there. That private system has to function on contributions, tuition, pickle cards, bingo, all of those other types of things in order to function. The public school system has taxpayer dollars. Both of them are funded unfairly and inadequately, and it has been one of my frustrations as the Chair of the Education Committee that those two entities have to square off against each other instead of putting their differences together and coming forward with proposals that will fund education fairly and honestly for everybody in our state. They fight over the crumbs that are at the bottom of the table that are left after the other entities that feast on our tax dollars are through feasting. One of the