

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Schmit, please.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President and members, Nebraska is not the only state in the nation that has a problem with the funding of schools. There are many other states that have learned long ago that the property tax is not an equitable method of supporting the funding of schools. I would just like to point out a couple of inequities which I believe you're going to find even though...even though no matter how well you try to nail down the lid, Senator Schellpeper, there are going to be more leaks in it than a colander. We, yesterday, I believe, we passed Senator Ashford's amendment which provided for a major exemption. Someone raised the question about the general funds. We know there are other funds that, of course, are available to schools, funds from the rental of school lands, fines, etcetera, which all come to the schools. I do not know, I'm not an expert on it, I never paid much attention to it except twice a year when I pay the taxes, what of those...what percentage of those funds come from extraneous sources. What I do know is this that no one has ever said this bill is going to improve the quality of education or which at the outset is going to help because we're throwing more money in it. I think the Appropriations Committee has found years ago that throwing money at a project does not necessarily improve the performance of it. No one has addressed the fact that Nebraska has a low pupil-teacher ratio. Does anyone know what percentage of the employees of a school district, in your own school district, for example, are engaged in nonacademic activities? I doubt it. Does anyone know what percentage of the budget goes for expenses such as busing, transportation and that sort of activity? I doubt it. Does anyone know what percentage of those busing costs are associated with extra curricular activities? I doubt it. During the Kerrey years and the Thone years we knew we were in hard times and on this floor we actually rolled back expenditures several times, 2 percent, 3 percent. We were told of all of the dire things that were going to occur. People were going to quit. There were going to be major loss of services, a whole host of events were going to take place. You know what? No one quit. Maybe a scattering did. No one quit. State government jobs, school jobs are not that bad of jobs. One of the things they do not like, and teacher have told me, they do not like to be told, okay, tonight you have to ride the bus with the pep club, even though we pay them extra. School teachers, strange as it may seem, have families of their own. They like to spend some time at home with their husbands or wives or children as well as