

I'm going to give Senator Dierks the first minute of my time.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Dierks, please.

SENATOR DIERKS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members of the body, I think that from the onset of this discussion on the consideration for the legislation in the first place that we were talking about property tax relief, and I can't think that this amendment of Senator Smith's would do anything but that. It appears to me that this is the purpose of our discussion yesterday and today is to provide property tax relief, and this will do it. It takes that money and puts it back in the General Fund to provide funding for school districts which would then in return provide relief from property taxes. It's just that simple. I think it's a very simple proposal and I think that's the purpose of the entire legislation. I'd urge your support of this amendment. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Chambers, four minutes.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, and Senator Scotty, I spoke a little prematurely when I mentioned I had a hammer over here. I don't have that, but I do have a brick. (Laughter.) We have to come prepared. Members of the Legislature, in all seriousness, I'm going to try to summarize what the point is that I'm trying to make and was trying to make through the discussion with Senator Moore. All of the supporters, undeviatingly, have portrayed this bill as one that will benefit education somehow. I'm not challenging what they say about how that will be done. They also say that the second prong of this bill is designed to provide property tax relief. Now if Senator Smith's amendment which is before us now is not adopted, then instead of saying this is a bill with two prongs, I'd have to say it's a bill with a forked tongue and we know that a forked tongue is a phrase that relates to something which does not deal with the truth, which misrepresents a position. This bill is being misrepresented by its supporters if this amendment is not adopted. What it will do is take an amount of tax money being raised through the machinery in this bill and apply the proceeds of that tax to the purposes of the bill. Now how in the world are those who have been saying that this is a property tax bill and an aid to the schools bill going to oppose an amendment that would send more money into the pot designed to benefit the schools and reduce property tax? Is it that the purpose is not to aid the schools?