

Could we have it more quiet, please. We can't hear the speakers and it is getting a little difficult. Thank you a lot.

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Mr. President, and members. I rise in support of Senator McFarland's amendment just to be consistent, I guess, if nothing else. The issue of raising the income tax for everyone across the board, I think, justifies what Jim has tried to do from the first time we debated 773 back in 1987, and that was to make sure that there was a progressive fifth bracket in our income tax system. The amendment that he brings to the bill, I think, allows us to, for me anyway, allows me to justify the increase in the income tax to those people who fall in those two middle brackets currently, that pay proportionately a higher share of their income, I think, than those at the very top end. And that is all Senator McFarland does in his amendment. It happens to increase the revenue that will be brought in. That, to me, is secondary to the fact that it will make our income tax system a fairer one. That really is the only reason for voting for this. We should have done it back in 1987 at the point in time where we made the major change. We are again making another major increase in our system. This would allow for that fairness to finally be achieved. I would urge the adoption.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Hall...Senator McFarland, please.

SENATOR McFARLAND: Yeah, just to follow up. This does not change 1059 as far as any of the other brackets are concerned, like my previous amendment does. It changes the one bracket, the highest bracket, of taxpayer in our state. It generates 10 to 12 million dollars of additional revenue for our state to use, and I am troubled by the argument that this is somehow an education bill. When you have a bill that increases state income tax 17.5 percent for taxpayers on the average, and when you have a bill that increases sales tax by 25 percent, that is a tax bill, and to say that somehow you change...you increase income tax and increase sales tax and then say but you can't make any changes or you can't question those changes because this has something to do with education just does not withstand the test of logic. You have a bill, the amendment is germane to that bill. I think this would be a worthy amendment. It would restore some of the fairness into the income tax system in our state. It would have the benefit of generating additional revenue for our state at a time we need it. You may have a few people who earn over \$90,000 who may not vote for you if you