

three to one. Some students are suffering by with very little spent on their education. Others happen to live in districts with a large property tax base that have a great deal of education spent...a great deal of dollars spent on their education. We have a situation where there are some people in our state that are able to pay a property tax to support schools of less than 1 percent of the value of their property. Others have to pay more than 3 percent of the value of their property. We have a situation, admittedly at our own devising, we have a situation where, if we don't pass something in the area of school finance this year, we're going to see the system that we do have sunset. We did that to ourselves as a Legislature a year ago, committing ourselves to resolve the problem. So far as a Legislature, we have been letting the people know that we are going to do that. We need to continue to do that. We're in a situation where, if we don't do something about property taxes this session, we're going to see, I think, a proposal brought to us by the citizens through the initiative petition that will certainly, certainly tie our hands way beyond anything that any Legislature has ever had its hands tied before. We have the court sitting on this particular case at this point, trying to make a decision as to whether what we have is fair or unfair. We have a situation where the same consultant that looked at Texas, looked at Kentucky, looked at Montana, has looked at our situation. Very many of the indicators that courts look at show that our situation is worse than those other states. So let's get away from looking at the specifics of whether a particular thing is on this bill that should be there or a particular item that shouldn't be on the bill that's included and start looking at what is going to happen if we adjourn this session, go home, not doing anything about property taxes. Senator Warner indicated to you this morning and he shared the information with me, if we pass nothing, if we pass nothing, there will be a 16.49 percent increase in property taxes at the same time that Mr. Jaksha is out there with his petition saying that we need to put a lid not just on state government, but on local government and on all of the subdivisions. If we do nothing, 16.49 percent increase in property taxes, something that this state cannot stand. We have to take a stand, we have to move forward. This bill has been amended, not tremendously, frankly, most of the main thrust of this bill is still before us. If we don't act this session, nobody is going to. We have to pass this bill and I would urge you to support the advancement.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Rod Johnson, followed by Senator