

SENATOR WITHEM: ...going around, throwing up your hands saying we can't find a consensus out there, you do that by building a consensus, and we need to do that. Passing this amendment is the fair, proper, just thing to do. The rhetoric about it killing the bill, endangering local subdivisions, this amendment doesn't do that, our current system does that. What this amendment does is it says an individual that is treated unfairly under the current system has an access to be treated fairly. Senator Bernard-Stevens was 100 percent right. When we're dealing with the rights of government, rights of subdivisions, keep in mind those subdivisions are those schools out there that I stand on this floor and bleed for, that I've spent my entire summer working around this state trying to find a better way to formulate those, the schools that I care for deeply are part of that system. But when you have a balance of the rights of government to take money, and the rights of individuals to be treated fairly, there is only one side you can come down on, and that is the side of those individuals who are treated unfairly. That's what this amendment does...

SPEAKER BARRETT: Time has expired. Senator Smith, please.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to let you continue, Ron, if you would, because I'm standing here...I'm sitting here listening, maybe I shouldn't even be listening to you, because I guess, (laughter)...the thing is, the point that I'm trying to make, and I know that Ernie has said so many good things and so many right things, and I understand your concern about people. But I also am saying, on the other side, Ernie, that if we strip away, and you're saying you feel like you're standing there naked with what we're dealing with here, if you strip away, so that we leave no resource for the continuation of the services that these people use at the local level, and this is the mechanism that we're using for that, we have to make a provision for that first, before we can do this, don't we? Ron, would you continue on, please.

SENATOR WITHEM: Senator Smith, thank you for your offer for the time. I guess I would just reiterate what we said last time you and I had this exchange here. I appreciate your question and your thoughts. Yes, we have to keep the services going. I think there are probably some other things we can do other than slamming the door in the faces of people as they come to the system and ask for money back that they think was taken from them unfairly. I don't know what those answers are. Part of