

SPEAKER BAACK: Senator Lamb.

SENATOR LAMB: Thank you, Mr. President, members, I have the amendment right here which the Page will distribute, but I'll describe it. It's an amendment which was adopted in committee on LB 698. It has to do with sparsity. You may remember that in our previous state aid formula there was a provision for sparsity, the problems caused by sparsity in some parts of the state, transportation, whatever other problems are encountered because of few people per square mile. This amendment says in effect that under this proposal, children between the ages of 5 and 18, if they're .15 or less per square mile, it's a 10 percent increase in the state aid. If at least .16, but not more than .4 children per square mile, it's 7.5 percent and if at least .41, but not more than .7 it's a 5 percent increase. The previous state aid formula we had, had sparsity in it which equaled about .54 of one percent of equalization aid. This formula results in .36 percent of aid, so it's a relatively small amount. It takes a little from a lot of districts. Fifty-eight districts receive more state aid and 383 districts lose aid. The total impact is \$816,253 which is shifted from other districts toward those sparsely settled districts, and that is what the amendment does. I would ask that it be adopted to provide for something that is not provided for in LB 1059 and that's additional, small amount of additional money for those school districts which have problems with sparsity.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Lamb. Senator Withem, on the Lamb amendment.

SENATOR WITHEM: Yes, Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I am in opposition to the Lamb amendment for a couple of reasons. Number one, in effect the way the committee, the commission that structured school finance report that ultimately became LB 1059 which ultimately became our school finance law, the way that committee decided to wrestle with issues like sparsity, issues like gifted education, issues like at risk students was...you know, we considered two options. We could up with a laundry list of factors that we would consider that would adjust the cost of school districts and apply for those and if we did that we would not have just a sparsity factor, we would have the full gamut as I started to go through, at risk students, poverty, low income, anything that could conceivably impact upon the cost of operating a school, we could have had a factor and an adjustment