

five years, but to see where we have come in the area of education and in looking to the future and putting into practice changes in the way we deal with education statewide. I think it's really significant and that's why, you know, I enjoy listening to the debate on the floor but I especially enjoy listening to Senator Withem and outlining the different pieces of the puzzle of primary and secondary education in our state. Some of the discussion has come to this. They say, well, we, you know, we've been getting letters from teachers and they appreciate us and we sure want to send them a message that we appreciate them and we're going to send them a good message but we're going to cut it off in two years or we're not going to cut it off in two years. I don't think that's the issue at all. The message is not to be sent to the teachers. I know I've got some letters myself from teachers who said thank you and I bought this or I bought that. That isn't...doesn't even come close to the issue. The issue is not whether or not we appreciate teachers. The question is what kind of an educational system we are going to have in the future. And, Senator Dierks, I support the tuition tax deduction for private and parochial schools and...but it doesn't have...it doesn't have a sunset on it. And I support that because I believe that that is a piece in the puzzle. It's a piece in the puzzle of primary and secondary education that we need to look at. It isn't...the other thing that I like about what Senator Withem has done with this state in the last five years in the area of education is he has broken down stereotypes, the stereotype that I always heard about when I first ran for the Legislature, well, you can't vote if you're for public education, you can't vote for private and parochial education. Well, that's hogwash. I would like to hear...I would like to find out when that first was said, probably 50 years ago. You know, we're going to have to break down these barriers in the area of the teachers' union. I keep...they list the donations in the newspaper how many...much money you get from the teachers' union and that's why you support aid to teachers. That's the most offensive thing I've ever seen. It has nothing to do with anything. It has nothing to do with anything. I wish we could break down the old stereotypes in the area of gun control, in the area of abortion. You know, I think we're getting there. I think we're starting to talk about the issues now. But what Senator Withem has done, and with the help of this body in the last five years, is move our state forward in the area of affiliation, in the area of tax equity, a bill I did not vote for but which I will concede has done a lot for our state. And this...this