

what we're really talking about. What we're really talking about is a policy decision that the Legislature made in 1989 and reaffirmed in '91, that our children are not getting the best quality of students in the colleges for education, going into education to be their teachers. Was there a way that we could begin to influence that so that young people would make career choices that have tremendous talent in education that they choose education instead of any other areas that offered more money? Was there a way that we could help encourage the good teachers that were within the system to stay because of the difficulty on the money side and we all understand that part of the difficulty on the money side is that in order for school districts to raise the level of salaries to where it can be competitive, we have to attack the property tax and that has been very, very difficult, if almost nonexistent. Consequently, we the Legislature have made two policy decisions in this debate. One, we believe in helping encourage the best teachers to stay and hopefully get into education and we've done that. Number two, we've said policywise that we hope and we try to have as much money as we can to have the best roads possible. We've done both of those. What this debate should be about is, is there any money, enough money to do both adequately and the answer to that is no. Last year the teachers were promised, were...started out at 20, I'll rephrase it that way, they gave up 20 percent of what they were asking for for the budgetary problems we had...

PRESIDENT MOUL: One minute.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: ...cut it down to 15 and hoped that they would be able to keep that and they were unable to. The Legislature gave them 15 million, the Governor vetoed it down, they're down to seven. We look at next year on the budgetary problems we have with Medicaid. Are we going to be able to finance even 7 percent or more with the 75 to \$150 million shortfall? Probably not. So we're not going to have, if we don't support something like this this year, there will be nothing for teachers, there will be no incentives for people to get in and stay in the education and all of our talk about wanting to support teachers but not here, is just that, pure rhetoric. There will be nothing there. What I am saying and what the people who have supported this amendment have said is that we have in the next six years nearly a billion dollars of money going for roads. Surely within that six-year concept of having nearly a billion, 948 I believe, million dollars for