

apply that one cent, continue to apply that one cent to the funding of an education program as opposed to funding a road program. That portion of the argument somehow doesn't get reported by the media, that the reason that extra penny was going into the Highway Trust Fund was because we raised that tax to fund education. Because of preexisting statutes, that triggered a contribution into the highway fund. What 1272 now says is that money will not go into the highway fund, it will go to fund teachers' salaries, a legitimate policy argument. It is not as if we are running into raising gas tax to fund teachers or any other thing along that line. The most laughable comment I heard this morning was one that Senator Hefner made and I think it bears repeating here. Senator Hefner said he could not support this pop tax...

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR WITHEM: ...because it is bad policy to earmark the funds from a particular tax to a particular purpose. That's what this whole thing is about, is whether we ought to be earmarking sales tax money to fund highways, whether we ought to be earmarking gas money to fund highways? My gosh, the biggest earmark in this entire state is the one that he is protecting, the earmarking of the money that goes into the Highway Trust Fund. This is not a raid on the Highway Trust Fund. At least for me this is not the first of many steps. I have no other interest in the Highway Trust Fund other than building highways. I support the building of highways. I support the building of the Harrison Street Interchange, Highway 370, the Kennedy Expressway. All of those items were funded before...were put on the plan, were scheduled to be funded before this one cent went into the Highway Trust Fund. They will continue to be funded. It's not a matter of not funding highways, it's a matter of bringing this one cent that was raised to support education...

SPEAKER BAACK: Time.

SENATOR WITHEM: ...expenses back to support education expenses. I support the bill in its current form. I will be voting to move the bill in its current form and I think we really need to get to a decision, are we going to move the bill in its current form or are we not? And I think we ought to quit this other sort of activity.

SPEAKER BAACK: Time.