

Last year the argument was that there wasn't as much money there. This year, unfortunately, there's still not as much money there. Obviously, if you adopt Senator Lynch's amendment you're \$8 million out of balance. And if the body would choose to adopt that amendment we can just send it over to the Governor, I guess, \$8 million out of whack. Probably the responsible thing to do, if you really want to fund this amendment, we do need to go in and find \$8 million worth of reductions somewhere to make that work. There are a variety of ways you can do that, obviously, but it's easier said than done. It's always been my opinion that one of the first things on the list for this Legislature to deal with this year would have been to have tried to restore to \$15 million the level of funding for the HELP initiative. I think that's something I would like to do. Unfortunately, basically all the revenue, all additional revenue, if you want to call it extra revenue, whatever you want to call it, this year was consumed by the Medicaid budget. I introduced a variety of bills that were somewhat less than popular to try and eliminate some of those Medicaid programs. It's been my intent that the teacher bill was in there last year, we ought to try and fund it again. Nobody wants to cut that, even though that's where most of the money went. I don't know where it is you want to eliminate to make room for this. Can it be done? It certainly can if the body has the will to do that, but that is certainly easier said than done as well. At this point in time, once again, I would remind the body last year that it was the committee's recommendation that this...that LB 91 was funded at \$15 million each year of the biennium, spending actions decided by the floor basically spent that money some place else. And that in conjunction with the veto overrides, I will defend the Governor, to make things balanced and to balance it with that type of money. The only place you could go, at that point in time, was to take it out of the teachers salary money. I wish it would not have had to happen that way. But the balance of 3 percent reserve, it had to happen that way. Now there is some...there was about \$15 million in extra money coming in this session. The Medicaid budget chewed up 14 million of that, and so there is not the money there to do that without cutting somebody else's program. And just want you to be aware that if you want to support Senator Lynch's amendment, you'll have to cut someplace else. I'm not saying that can't be done. Anything can be done, but Senator Lynch's amendment does not copy the Governor's, and Senator Lynch stated this, he does not pull the money out of 1059. And so with that I'd reluctantly rise to oppose Senator