

SENATOR ELMER: Thank you, Senator Morrissey. I thought we'd get a little talk, being so little interest in whether or not we should have 25 or 30 votes on real property I'll withdraw that amendment.

SENATOR MORRISSEY: It is withdrawn. Back to the...Anything else? Back to the Lindsay-Baack amendment. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Mr. President, members. I have mixed feelings about this proposal. The original compromise that was suggested, last Friday, by a group of us that met with the Governor, was very similar to this, with some very important distinctions. I'd like to talk about that. We were talking about the idea of 30 votes to gain an exemption, but we weren't talking about 30 votes to lose an exemption. And that is a very important difference. What is being proposed here is crossing the line between compromise and, in my view, capitulation. And we crossed that line when we say it's going to take 30 votes, if you gain an exemption, to lose the exemption, here's why. In my view, my whole philosophy behind the discussion on this amendment has been a broader tax base is better. The fewer the exemptions the better. And the more we can move toward that concept, the better off our tax system will be. That's just fundamental philosophy that I have, and I think most of us share that. That's why...Why do we have this philosophy? Because as you provide for exemptions you narrow the tax base, and the tax burden is shifted, so the few benefit greatly from the exemptions, while the many pay ever higher taxes. And the figures I showed indicate that the many being, for instance homeowners are paying 20 percent...19 percent more in real estate taxes, so that personal property taxpayers don't have to pay any taxes on that personal property. So you have a tax shift, and the few benefit, and the many make up the difference. Thus, I believe, following that philosophy that that is not good, and the reason that you get exemptions is usually you're more powerful, more influential, and that is why you're successful in getting exemptions. And that is why I, again, in my philosophy feel that I have to look out for the little guy. And I've been doing that every year I've been down here. And so when you get exemptions, you by and large have some power, or you wouldn't have the exemptions. Okay, that's the philosophical basis of it. So if I believe it should be harder to get an exemption, and easier to lose an exemption, I cannot, in good conscience, go along with this compromise. It should be