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PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Wehrbein. Senator Conway.

SENATOR CONWAY: Thank you, Madam President, and members, typically before any session we all sometimes sit down alone for a moment and try to give some general thought to how things may go and how they may play out relative to our own districts or how they may play out to the state as a whole. In anticipation of this session, as we probably have as I have been here over the eight years been involved in several budget cutting sessions, and falling in line somewhat with what Senator Dennis Byars alluded to a little earlier, one of the things that I tried to make a philosophical commitment to was that after all of the work and time and energy and activity that has gone into the last few years relative to the distribution of state funds as a means or at least as an attempt to reduce the burden on the property taxpayer that we've put forth all of this type of work that I somewhat made a commitment to myself that upon looking at any of the budget cuts to the best of our ability that one should not alter that particular course that we've set ourselves on. Upon seeing the introduction of the reduction in the MIRF bill, knowing that for the most part most of these communities have taken those funds at our word, knowing they're going to be coming along, have made commitments, some of them have bonded indebtedness, as has been mentioned on the floor before, tied to them and extended out for an extended period of time as well, but I see this as really nothing more than a cut that at attempt to balance the state budget we, in essence, are doing it again on the backs of the property taxpayer because we know that that translation will be there. Most of these infrastructural needs are true needs that I'm sure the communities have anguished over for a great deal of time and through the help of MIRF was able to kick out some of those programs and move them in. We have communities and I have communities in my district who have very severe problems relative to the water quality. I get a notice about once a month of another community who has been tagged for water problems. These are the kinds of funds that are going to go in there. They're the things that the communities are going to have to do one way or another and simply by reducing the MIRF funds it eliminates one more technique that they have at their disposal without having to pass it directly onto the property taxpayers. So I rise in opposition to this particular adjustment. I think there are other areas that we could look at in terms of state operations and state activities that we may be much better able to address without simply turning this