

well as the highest tuition, I think the number that I've heard is, of that 300,000, 190,000 of it is at the university. And, obviously, if you are of the opinion that they can absorb that, then you may not have any problem with the bill. The reason I rise to oppose the bill is that I think it's a valid question for this state to make some...to ask some questions about what role from the budgetary standpoint should the state play in this program. Obviously, tuition assistance is something that we've talked about more than once in this body. I know there's been several bills and several compromises over the year and it's still, I guess, an ongoing point of concern as to how much money we, as a state, from state General Fund dollars need to be put into this program. The other thing to keep in mind is that actually the bill, as the Appropriations Committee introduced it, would have simply capped a payment at \$500 to any one individual and that...I mean, so, depending on your tuition, depending on how money...what your tuition rate was at the school you were attending, that may or may not have an impact on you. Once again, obviously, the major impact there would have been to those students attending state colleges and the university, since the tuition rate is higher there and that \$500 does not go as far on a credit hour point than it would at community colleges and on down the line. The thing about it is you have to think about is that, you know, how much do we...I'm not questioning the validity of this program, it's very good, but you also have to understand there are other programs that individuals that qualify for this do indeed qualify for. In 1990 there was a study that, I think, at that point in time 800...at that point 800 people qualified for at least tuition assistant grants, at that point in time it was something like 80 percent of them also received other help, either it would be the federal GI bill or student loan repayment programs. You know, the federal GI bill, now anyone qualifying for that as a full-time student would receive \$170 a month in a cash payment, \$175 a month in a cash payment for those that qualify under the federal GI bill. These are the same people that we're talking about giving additional assistance through the state. And certainly that is a very, very good recruiting tool. I have no problem with that, but I think at some point in time this Legislature is going to have to come to grips with where do we want to spend our dollars. I think a very classy example, once again one of the two things that the Appropriations Committee and now the Legislature, with this confirmation of LB 1, has chosen to exempt from across-the-board cuts is DPI and part of that is the component dealing with veterans' homes.