

funds constitute the only state funds that have gone specifically for education improvement. This bill begins siphoning of those away. So I will not be supportive of 860, as it is written, point number one. Point number two, Senator Robinson and I are very much on line on another point, and that is that the Internet connection is something that is pretty important to school districts. As a matter of fact, it was legislation that I sponsored that has gotten us to much further down that road, where the ESUs now have been funding, have been using some of their property tax allocation to become nodes for Internet, so it is much easier now for local school districts to connect. So I would like to work with Senator Robinson to find an alternative way to do the same thing he wants to do. He and I have had preliminary discussions on that, and it is my fault, it certainly isn't his, it is my fault because I've been involved with other things, and I just have not had the time to sit down and have those discussions. So I am not going to resist the advancement of this bill today, but I will resist, if the bill is not in some other form, very strenuously the advancement of this bill as it reaches Select File. Other things I think we could do, Senator Robinson, we have had preliminary discussions, but I just want to inform everybody else of this, I think some of that, when we passed the ESU bill, we kind of drew a line the way it was drafted, that the ESUs can spend lots of money at the ESU level on staff and staff development, and machinery and equipment, but they can't use any of their funds to provide this connection. And I've had a bill in a couple of different times I think that would allow them to do that, and I'd like to work toward that kind of solution. Another thing I became aware of the other day is school weatherization money is being sunsetted, the school weatherization program is up for a sunset, and I think, Senator Beutler, the Energy Department came to the committee indicating that they thought that telecommunications equipment was a worthy goal for use of that school weatherization money. My problems with that bill that was in your committee is I don't know what in the world the Energy Department has dealing with telecommunications. Maybe that's some funds we could use to help provide this. I will support those kinds of ideas. I will not, however,

SENATOR HALL: One minute.

SPEAKER WITHEM: ...support the use of the lottery funds. With that, I will be voting for the advancement of 860 today but