

about it's...we're changing the way we will deliver services. That's a wonderful buzz word these days. But remember that this is federally...special ed is federally mandated. The funds originate with the federal government and if we lose...if we are not...if our school districts are not reimbursed more or at the same level as they are now, that will cost the local districts unless they cut out services. And so that's what I feel. I put on my little pin this morning, Children First immediately, because here again I think we are forgetting about the children. We are always concerned about the mechanism, about the rules, about the regulations, and how can we help the school districts and/or anyone who happens to be involved? I don't think this bill is going to help. I don't think it's going to reach the goal that the introducers say it is. I don't think it's going to help with the services being delivered any better. I don't think it's going to help the school districts in cutting expenses. When you look at the handout, most of the money goes to salaries. You have to have the teachers to teach the children no matter whether they're handicapped or not, you have to have teachers. And that's always in the school budget, salaries is the big item. You will notice on the hearing committee statement only two people proposed this bill, the introducer and the Lieutenant Governor in behalf of the Governor. Everyone else who came in opposed the bill, educators, administrators, everyone came in and opposed the bill. It's because it's against children. And I know that the introducers aren't going to like that when I say that but it is, because you're not thinking of the children that you are serving. There's a lot of parents out there that are very apprehensive right now over this bill because they think the 16 to 21-year-olds eventually may be left out. The other thing, I don't like this idea of saying, well, health problems aren't a handicap. Certain health problems can be a handicap, especially to a child when that child is developing. So I think we just have to be very careful and when you look at the percentages, 25 percent, I think Senator McKenzie said, are the severely handicapped children. All of us know that even though that sounds like a small percentage, and it is, that it costs more to educate those children because you have to have equipment, you have to have more space, you have to have special teachers and we chose, a long time ago, this decision was made a long time ago, to educate these children. They deserve an education. Many of them respond in such a wonderful way that eventually when they go into the workshops or whatever they do in later life that education has helped them and they've been with