

want to respond to a couple of things that have been said perhaps this morning or just a short while ago by Senator Chambers. One of the things that Senator Chambers alluded to in his first speech on the bill was his opposition to the proposition that we should limit special ed increases to the increases in general education funding, indicating that it costs more to take care of kids with special needs than it does with kids who are mainstreamed, normal in learning abilities. The thing that I'd like you to consider, Senator Chambers, is that we are already starting out with costs in the special ed area per student at a much higher level, which is understandable, which is what you were saying. Let's say we have a 10,000 per year cost for special education student, which isn't out of...out of reason, and we have a 5,000 per year cost for a regular educated student, and if we keep them at the same rate of growth or increase, 5 percent on the \$10,000 per year student would be \$500, 5 percent on the \$5,000 per year student would be \$250, and using that rationale, what I'm trying to say is even with that language you're going to have more of an increase per year in absolute dollars for special ed help than you will for regular educated students. And bear in mind that the bill is a starting point. We...we... I don't know how anyone could argue in here that we should do nothing. I think if you argue we should do nothing then you are the ones that are hurting kids because we're going to get to the point in five years, six years, seven years when we will have no money to fund some of the programs that you want to support. We won't have it because most of it will be going for things that are out of control in cost in areas like this. We won't be able to educate the students you want to educate in the way you want to educate them because you won't have the money. We are on an absolute collision course, and if you say a vote for this bill is a vote against kids, you're wrong. A vote for this bill is a vote to start a process in motion, the bill doesn't provide the solutions, the bill sets out the problem and says this is the process we're going to take to approach solving the problem. We're asking those who are experts in the area, providers, people who are parents of special ed kids, the teachers, the administrators to help us find the solutions. The solutions are going to be built from the bottom up instead of dictated from the Legislature down. And I think if we had more legislation built that way we'd have better laws that we enacted. This law is just the beginning. We won't know what we're going to do in terms of the specifics until next year, perhaps the year after even, and that to me is the way we're going to help kids. We