

embodied in this amendment and will oppose the amendment. Thank you.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Wickersham. Senator Maurstad.

SENATOR MAURSTAD: Thank you, Madam President. I rise in opposition to the Avery amendment but since we seem to have drifted off a little bit into some philosophical discussions, I will use this opportunity to address some of the...some of those comments that have been raised. And I want to do that by, first of all, indicating a couple of major changes in the General Fund appropriation. These are found on page 19 of the blue book, Table 9, Significant General Fund increases. And I think that if people take a little time to analyze that, you can see that we're pumping another \$14.7 million back into schools at the local level to help state aid, to try to hold down property taxes. We're looking at \$6 million in special education. A little farther down the line we're looking at a 1.2 million dollar increase in technical community colleges, another property tax related issue in funding the community colleges which provides higher education at a very economical cost. A little bit farther down the line you see 25.4 million, and the next fiscal year of the increase is in employees' salaries. And I think we need to point out again that the state employees virtually had no increase in the previous biennium. I think that you will notice that we're spending a significant amount of money in the area of developmental disability, a commitment that was made by this Legislature that is now being funded. This is a gigantic step forward. We've increased the amount of aid to individuals relative to mental health. So I think that there are some very significant areas where there are increases that, in the view of the Appropriations Committee, are certainly justifiable. As one of the speakers indicated, a lot of the discussions that are occurring, of course, have occurred in the course of the past three and a half months in a very healthy exchange between Appropriation Committee members as we went through the budget item by item. Finally, another area where there is substantial increase is in the area of corrections, juvenile and also funding of adult corrections. One of the other things that we hear out on the stump in addition to let's do something about property taxes is let's do something about crime. I think this budget acknowledges that fact. I think that also we also have a strong feeling of taking care of those who can't take care of themselves and I'm not just talking about