

amendment between this moment and General File when we first discussed it. And I think Senator McKenzie has done a great job as far explaining what the changes were. The only comment I would like to add is one of the concerns I had when the original bill was in committee was that it was simply a straight cap and that was all that there was, and we still have as we still do now all of the state and federal mandates and if you just do a straight cap, the way that it was introduced, all that does is say that we, as a state, are not going to spend any money but we transfer all of that to the property tax side, and that did not make any sense to me and I think a large number of people on the Education Committee. And so this particular amendment, I think, has a bit of compassion to it and that is that we know that we have to get special ed costs under control. I don't think there's anyone in education that doesn't feel otherwise. But the one thing that it does do is that it does allow that first year that growth rate which would be the same growth rate as what would be in general education so that we're not having that...that tremendous cap all of a sudden without all of the study and follow-up that we need to do to find out whether or not a block grant system or another spending formula would actually be better. So this amendment that Senator McKenzie has is much more compassionate, I think, much more realistic than a straight cap at...the only best argument for the straight cap is you get to save more money but you get to dump it off on the school districts. And I don't think that's good policy. This one we don't save as much money as a state but it's much more reasonable on how we handle the school districts. In talking with the school districts that I have over the weekend and many of the people that are pushing in the education lobby, they are much more comfortable with the growth factor involved rather than a straight cap because they have been trying to find ways to reduce the property tax burden, not increase it. So, with those comments, Senator McKenzie, if you need more time, otherwise we'll just get to the general discussion of whatever amendments may be there, and I thank Senator McKenzie for a few minutes of her opening.

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Senator Bernard-Stevens. Senator McKenzie, do you waive the balance of your...it is waived. Senator McKenzie, your light is next.

SENATOR MCKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. President, and members of the body, I wanted to add also my concerns and reasons for increasing beyond the flat zero percent lid. Let me make sure