

you understand a couple things. Special education has never, ever in this state had a cap. We have a system that works like this, and let me make an analogy. If I was allowed some extra money every month to pay for incidentals beyond my control, while I'm down here in the Legislature, and I was given one of two approaches, one allowed me to have a block grant approach which said at the beginning of the month, Jan, you're going to get \$1,000, that's what you get. That should cover whatever you're spending outside what we consider what you should spend. The other approach says at the end of the month, Jan, you reimburse or you submit your expenses and we'll reimburse you for 90 percent of your expense. Now in which system am I going to be more likely to control my spending? Nebraska's special education system right now is one that says you spend what needs to be spent and let me argue that I believe school districts tend to spend what they need to spend and at the end of that year you submit your expenses and we will reimburse you somewhere between 60 and 90 percent of what you have spent. We're moving...the intent language in this amendment moves us to a system where we tell you at the beginning of the year you're going to get this much money and if you have emergencies, we're going to hope to build a system that addresses those emergencies. So we have never, in this state, had any kind of cap LB 742, in its original form, started a flat zero percent cap that never existed before. In my mind, when we have had the discussion about lowering spending limits for schools and counties and cities we talked about whether or not that's reasonable, whether or not we believe we can ask political subdivisions to hold spending at a level lower than the rate of inflation or the CPI. I think I have that right now. It's CPI, not CPR. This amendment, I think, makes more sense in terms of what school districts can actually do, and it's not superintendents who make these decisions about spending in special ed, it's parents, it's the needs of those children and, in many cases, it's the advocacy groups who are there to help those families protect the civil rights of these children. So going from a system where you've been able to spend what you wanted and received reimbursement to one that is now going to cap it, at no more than 5 percent of what special education is allowed to grow, is a pretty significant change. It's not as though we can wave a magic wand out there and all 37,000 special education children, whether they should be verified or not, are going to suddenly change or their families change (coughs) their ideas about services. Mr. President, I will have to waive off at this point. Excuse me.