

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you. I do think that this will begin setting the tone for the debate that will take place on LB 742 next week. I did not anticipate the amendment passing, but I did want to begin to make a point, and that is I hope that the debate on special education next week is on policy, on what is the best for those children that have developmental disabilities and have special needs. What is the best policy? How do you want to affect the program? How much do you want to squeeze schools? How much blood do you want to get out of the turnip? And I hope that members are not going to be supporting the Bromm-Bohlke amendment simply because they want to spend more money elsewhere. If that is the debate that we are going to have, we will...some people will say I want to vote because I want to have six more million dollars to spend and you want to take it out of developmental disabilities and special education needs, then we are going to have one heck of a battle next week. And one of the things I'd like to indicate to the body is I don't mind a compromise when there is room, and there is room for a compromise. Senator McKenzie has 5 percent on the growth. Senator Bohlke wants to get that blood out of the turnip and wants to go ahead and say, no, we are going to cut \$12 million out; there is not going to be any real major cost advantages on the rules and regs, which they already have waived now, and we are going to see what happens. And then they are going to argue that if there is...does treat the schools terribly, we will come back and give a deficit appropriation. Well, that's fine, but on the other hand, the school districts that were already going to lower their lid as far as what they can do on their budget will have to take the monies on the General Fund out of those budgets now. If we go to that route, I am willing to go ahead and go to the mat and say that we will have zero. We will have no savings. We will be in deficit, because I don't want that bill to pass, and I will do everything I can to make sure that bill doesn't pass, and you are going to have to make the tough decisions elsewhere. If there is some room for negotiation, I am willing to, over the weekend, to do so, but I don't want to take away from special education simply because somebody wants to spend it over somewhere else. Let's debate it on the policy, and as Senator Warner said, it is a good idea. It may, in fact, have been too soon but I wanted to send the first shot, that if we do save monies, we need to transfer it to the Cash Reserve, so that we truly cut spending, not simply go ahead and say we are going to cut it so we can spend it elsewhere, and we are going to spend that money on the backs and on the families of