

discussion is made, whether the 6 million, zero savings, or 12 million savings, anything above 6 million dollars of savings that we've already shown on the budget status, I will move to transfer to the Cash Fund, General...the Cash Reserve Fund, so that we don't have senators that will vote against kids on developmental disabilities, special education needs so that they can spend those dollars to some other pet program they have. I will not do that to those children and families, period. I don't think I've ever felt more strongly about an issue in my life. That may even go back to parental notification. So I wanted people to be upfr...I wanted to be up front. I wanted people on all sides to know where I am coming from. I want to discuss the policy issue. I want to be involved in that policy issue, but I am not going to tighten the lid so hard on schools that we find out later that we did too much, they had to reduce staff, they had to reduce programs, they had to raid their own general funds, to cut funding for other things in education because we pushed too hard. And I defy anyone to tell us on the floor that they know for sure that the schools can simply absorb a 12 million dollar hit. Nobody knows that, and I know the administration has been out saying that don't worry, they can do it. They can waive budgets. We will let them waive all the waivers and that will handle it. That will not handle it. In fact, if you go this weekend, look at the waivers. There is no waiver there that will give them very much cost-effectiveness in adjusting to a 12 million dollar hit. And it is already current law that they right now can waive any of the rules and regulations, and those school districts that have asked for waivers, the department, in most cases, has denied those waivers. So don't tell me that just because there is waiver, and we are going to waive it, which is already law, that that will fix the 12 million dollar hit? It won't. You can't take that big a chance. You can't put these families and kids at risk, and, by the way, if you do put them at risk, the only thing you are putting at risk is our ability to be sued.

SENATOR HALL: One minute.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Because we have stated in law, we will provide the services. Senator McKenzie's bill makes a lot of sense. Her amendment makes a lot of sense. Policywise, it makes a lot of sense, but let's don't screw up the policy because we are trying to get dollars into other areas. Let's really talk about the policy. And that's what I will be prepared to do, and after that policy decision, I will be