

something that if we really are to put our money where our mouth is on higher education, at all three levels, in all three areas, this is where we can do it. And so I oppose Senator Avery's amendment. I understand where he is coming from. It is an area that is optional, you might say. It is not a mandate. It is one of those things that we don't have to do, but it is one of those things that helps higher education, helps our students, and so we had recommended at funding it to this level and I would urge your opposition to the amendment.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Wehrbein. Senator Vrtiska.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Madam President, members of the body. Yes, I agree we need to make some adjustments and we need to make some cuts, and, certainly, I hope that before we are through with this process that that happens. The question is where the priorities are and where do we want to make the cuts. It is not easy to oppose Senator Avery's amendment to make these adjustments that he has attempted to make. However, I feel this is one area that I am going to have difficulty in supporting simply because of partially what Senator Wehrbein has just finished talking about, and the fact that...also what Senator Lynch said. It seems only fair that if some of these kids decide they want to go to a private school and they need some assistance, and the amount of money that we are talking, it is kind of a difficult process to say, no, that we will give it to public schools, the ones that are already tax supported, and not to the others. Like I said, it is a difficult decision to make and either way you can be criticized, but, in fact, I stand in opposition to Senator Avery's amendment simply because the old adage, fair is fair, and I think here we are in a situation where we need to address the same kind of fairness for some of these kids who are attending these schools. So even though I do have some reservations about how we adjust our budget in order to meet...to be fiscally responsible, this is one area that I am not going to support Senator Avery in. I hope he can come up with some other amendments that I can feel much easier to support. With that, thank you.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator. Senator Lindsay.

SENATOR LINDSAY: Thank you, Madam President, member. I, too, rise in opposition to the Avery amendment. Looking at the greater scheme of things that constitutes the money, the entire amount of money, not just the cut, the entire amount of money