

conversations with individuals other than superintendents, regular education personnel and parents who I asked the most important question and that was, do you or do you not believe that we can find some significant savings or some significant areas in which to get serious about containing special education cost growth. I'm passing out a couple of pieces of information for you. The first is from the Revenue hearing sessions that we had, Revenue Committee sessions we had last summer on entitlement growth. And those of you who attended remembered... would remember that we talked about the fact that three entitlements, the big three, were growing at a rate that was not... was going to eventually eat up all the rest of the state budget. And I asked Tom Bergquist to break down those numbers for us so we could look at special education. And if you have that sheet in front of you, you will see that since 1974 and '75, through the projection in the year 2004, we will have increased from \$3.6 million to \$299.6 million if we continue at the current rate of 10 percent growth. The original legislation never had a flat cap. The original legislation had language that allowed the Legislature to appropriate a set amount of money. The cap came in when we talked about 5 percent. Special education has not had a 10 percent cap or 10 percent anything. That's the average rate of growth and some school districts will tell you that they have had a higher rate than that. So in terms of your basic information, I wanted to share that with you and also draw your attention to the second page of the entitlement handout so you can see what will happen in the next ten years if we don't do something about the rate of growth. Medicaid and public assistance are two areas where we have struggled. Senator Chambers has always made it important for us to struggle when we talk about changing those areas, but I believe we have attempted to look at what we need to do in those two areas. The other section is a piece of information from the Special Ed Accountability Commission that I had received about a month ago and had kind of forgotten about, but I have to say that it is the piece of information that changed my mind. And I know, Senator Bernard-Stevens, my apologies to you for standing up and supporting the Bohlke-Bromm amendment, but it's this document that changed my mind, along with the arguments of a couple members of this commission who said, in fact, that we ought to have a lid with no waivers if we are truly serious about seeing where costs can be saved. This program has never been asked to slow its spending, never been required to do any more than submit their reimbursement form and hope the things they put down were in categories. Now three