

Senator Bernard-Stevens. Senator, I have a note you want to withdraw AM1916 and offer 2354.

SPEAKER WITHEM: There is a request for a substitution. Is there any objection? Hearing none, go right ahead.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the body, actually this morning I woke up intending to withdraw the amendment and I still may but I think what I'll do is put it up there for discussion, play it by ear. If there seems to be a strong support which I don't sense there is, I would probably bring it to a vote, but I do think it would allow for some discussion on the bill itself. The amendment, AM2354 basically...well, not basically, it strikes Section 4 of the committee amendment which would leave the basic allowable growth rate for education at 4 to 6.5 percent to that range; the argument again being that public education is, in fact, in a state...is going to be and continue to be in a state of flux at this point. We have done some things and hopefully will continue to do things on special education. We're also looking at a constitutional change in the next couple years, next year or so if we get something that the body can agree with, if the public can accept it and if it goes through we might have some type of lid on levies. And with that uncertainty, I would rather keep the school growth simply where it is. I don't see the real benefit with the exception of saying we're going to be doing something on the property tax side of just doing this at this moment in time. I'm against lids in the beginning, I'll vote against 613 regardless of how the bill is. I don't like the lids at state level. I think the whole responsibility should be at the local level and they should take the heat for whatever decisions they make. I just personally believe that the schools should be left in their particular growth rate area now, make it a local decision, make them continue to try to be accountable for the actions and wait and see what happens on the constitutional side on the levy lid and I just think it would be a better policy to follow. I'll leave it up for a while to see if there's any interest in the discussion.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Bernard-Stevens, you're recognized to close.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Well, there's no discussion on that, Mr. Speaker. I think I'll withdraw the amendment at this time.