

February 14, 1996 LB 1050

And I think we maybe are shortchanged if we start looking at, like Senator Bohlke said, maybe we don't have the printouts. But that, I think, is what we should try to do is provide the same educational opportunity, wherever you live in this state. And I think I oppose the Wickersham amendment.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator. Senator Withem.

SPEAKER WITHEM: (Microphone not activated immediately.) ...the body, I rise in opposition to the Wickersham amendment. Would like to cover just a couple of issues fairly quickly. One of those is Senator Wickersham brought the argument of breaking faith with the voters of the state. When he said that I decided to go, and this is a dangerous precedent to start, I know, I decided to go back and read the statute to see what we actually said to the citizens of the state at that time. And I think, if anything, what we need to look at is the intent language, 79-3802, legislative findings and intent. What did we promise the people that we were going to attempt to do by changing the school finance formula? We defined...we promised them we were going to try to provide state support from all sources, funding for 45 percent. We promised them we were going to reduce the reliance on property taxes for support of the public school system. We've done that. We're going to broaden financial support for the public school system by dedicating a portion of the revenue received from the state income tax for support of the system. We're doing that. And, quite frankly, we continue to do that. This \$83 million, or \$86 million, whichever it is, continues to be a portion of the state income tax for the support of the system. Further down we...I won't read everything here, but we assured the people of the state that we were going to assure a greater level of equity of educational opportunities for students in all districts, and we were going to assure a greater level of equity in property tax rates for support of the public school system. Those, to me, as again the principal introducer of LB 1059, were the critical promises we made to the voters of the state, that we were going to move toward a more equitable school funding formula, equitable support for students in our state, as Senator Beutler has indicated, and equitable treatment of our taxpayers in the state. What have we done? And I passed out a sheet here, I saw Senator Wickersham had already passed out a similar sheet here. But in 19...1991-92, 52.3 percent of all of the money that came from the state went for the purposes of equalizing educational