

February 14, 1996 LB 1050

opportunity. We're now down to the point where it's only 48 percent, and the trend lines continue to get worse, and worse, and worse, to the point where, by the year 2008, we'll be in a situation not that dissimilar to what were in during the... prior to the passage of LB 1059, and that is where a small minority of the money going out to support schools goes to equalize education opportunity. That was a promise made to the citizens of the state, that's the one I'm the most interested in keeping. I was ready when these two... And I think maybe Senator Wickersham and I would agree that the goal of continuing the rebate at 20 percent, and the goal of continuing to equalize causes... are two goals that we've had in conflict. And he comes down on the side of keeping the promise of the 20 percent rebate, as he see it, I come down on the side that the equity is the more important commitment that was made to the voters at that time and I think we ought to maintain that. My preference was, quite frankly, to come forward and indicate the rebate was something that we put into the formula and it just isn't working. I would have liked to seen us get rid of the rebate. Again, that was the proposal I took to the Education Committee. What the Education Committee has done is they said we're going to cap it back at the dollar amount that was given back when the bill passed. As far as the arguments that I've heard of are we moving too quickly, one other thing I guess I would point out, back in 1993,...

RESIDENT ROBAK: One minute.

SPEAKER WITHEM: ...it became apparently already that the trend lines on equalization, vis-a-vis income tax, vis-a-vis the other factors in the formula, were getting us to the point where the equalization... more and more schools were dropping out of equalization, fewer schools were qualifying for equalization, we needed to do something to break that trend. That year, in 1993, the Education Committee put a bill forward to cap income tax rebate. Bills were introduced in '94, bills were introduced in '95. So this is not a new issue, this is not a new concern. We've had printouts up and down main street. We don't have a specific one on this one, but we've had the printouts to know what types of school districts are going to see more state aid as a result. It tends to be those school districts that have lower wealth in their districts for taxation purposes,...

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Time.