

February 15, 1996 LB 1050

mine when I get done visiting here.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Okay.

SENATOR ELMER: Would you say that the real goal of equalization is to have property tax paid to support quality education as nearly equal across the state as we can make it?

SPEAKER WITHEM: I would say there are two legs to equalization. To me the more important leg is that the students in the state have, as nearly as equal as possible, an equal sum of money spent on their education. Under... In an ideal world then that also would probably drive that the taxpayers in those districts would also pay roughly equal property taxes. But to me the more important part is that equal dollars go in to support...and that's not nitpicking, that's a slight difference from the way you raised the question.

SENATOR ELMER: Okay. Let's say that then the property tax that's levied across the state as equally as possible for instructional purposes. And if in a particular school district the voters would like to have an exceptionally fancy structure for their school children to attend, then they could vote themselves that tax levy to construct that fancy piece of architecture that schools could be conducted within, and leave that outside of the equalization and the property tax formula that we're talking about. And at the same time have the Legislature encourage efficiencies, without sacrificing quality, through efficient types of restructuring involving administration of our schools, and involving different sizes of schools, where that might be practical, where densities of population would allow.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Oh, you're...you're...I thought you were making a statement. Yeah, you could do that. I mean as a matter of fact I've introduced bills before that attempt to have the state fund kind of a core average level of education. And then if you want to do things like have higher teacher-pupil ratios, or operate schools at a higher per pupil expense, then those dollars would come from the local taxpayers.

SENATOR ELMER: I think that's what our goal really is here. And perhaps this bill would be a progression toward that. And if we are faced with levy caps, with a successful petition drive