

very, very appropriate that the district would base that decision on. So I think it has the potential to really cause some difficulty for families in the state. It would be a policy that I don't think, once it was presented to them, that they would agree with. And that's the basis for my opposition to the amendment. Thank you, Madam President.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Maurstad. There are no further lights. Senator Bernard-Stevens, you're recognized to close on your amendment.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Madam President, members of the body. I appreciate the discussion. And, again, if the amendment doesn't go it's not going to make or break any district. If it does go, it's not going to certainly have any effect on any district. The bottom line is it's simply a policy question. Under the current law today, a school district can decide when they are going to accept option students, that's been the whole goal. We were never going to force them to take students that they could not accept because they were already full, I mean that was the spirit of the option enrollment. But we made an exception to that, and the exception was on the sibling side. What this amendment would do is say we're not going to mandate that school districts have to take siblings if they've already accepted another family member. School districts still can, they can still take whomever they want, but they would not be mandated to take, when they had an overcrowding situation and they're having a budget cut...budget reductions because of what we may do on the property tax side, we're not then going to, at the same time, say, yes, we know you're having larger class sizes, yes, we know you're having to reduce. By the way, we're going to give you one other student that you have to educate, and in the case of some school districts we're not going to give you any extra money because you may have netted out to be zero or in the negative on your option students. So it does level the playing field for everyone. And if there's an opening, a child may be able to get in. If a school board wants to go ahead and say our policy is going to be if we take a sibling, we'll take the other ones, that's fine, they can still do so. But they will not be mandated to take a student when they've already decided that that area is too full. And that's all the amendment does, I would urge its adoption.