

March 19, 1996

LB 299, 1114, 1176
LR 292

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Okay, but this bill itself does not guarantee that. It's just if we increase the fees.

SENATOR WARNER: No.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Okay.

SENATOR WARNER: And one of the reasons the fees are as high as they are is that in order for the more populated counties with all the distribution required by statute you had to have the fees a lot higher all the way through in order for the more populated counties not to lose substantial money. This would permit...avoid that problem. If you didn't want to distribute more money, you could have lower fees under this distribution.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Right. And, Senator Warner, I think you understand that I'd be interested in distributing more money into equalization. But, members of the body, I do want to make sure that people understand that what you do by taking this section out or by deleting the lines, you do give the Legislature a lot more flexibility. But as it is now, at least the dollars go back to those entities where the dollars come from in proportion to those school districts or counties in proportion to how they affect their levy. If we would decide to do what is in LB 1176, which obviously will be debatable next year or so...

SPEAKER WITHEM: One minute.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: ...you're going to have to, in order to get more money, you'll have to increase the fees. But, too, you need to remember if the dollars going to equalization, which I concur is where I'd like for it to go, that means if you're a nonequalized district you'll get none of those dollars. And so as we move on school finance and we move into the other areas, we need to understand that more dollars will be going into equalization. At the same time, if you look at LB 1114 and LB 299, you're going to see that the needs of the school districts are going to stay the same or go up. Their ability to have resources will go down as they cannot collect or they go down on their collection so there will be more schools that technically will be equalized schools. So even if you put more dollars in there, it may not mean that there are more dollars