

ASSISTANT CLERK: Madam President, the next amendment I have is offered by Senator Wickersham. It's found on page 1063 of the Legislative Journal. (AM3545)

PRESIDENT ROBAK: The Chair recognizes Senator Wickersham to open on his amendment.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Thank you, Madam President. This amendment addresses two areas that we've already visited before in 1050 and I understand that Senator Bohlke has some strong views about this amendment and she'll... Well, maybe she doesn't. She did this morning, earlier this morning. This amendment, see how good my intelligence is, Senator Bohlke. The people are everywhere. The amendment addresses two aspects of 1050; one, how do we pay for the option program and the second, the income tax rebate reprogram? On General File we adopted two sets of provisions in those areas. One, we capped the income tax rebate at roughly 102 million dollars and, secondly, we made changes in the option program so that we netted out option costs. We set a guideline for the costs that would be reimbursed for the option students and we also adopted a provision which causes the cost of the option program to be taken out of the 102 million dollars that we had allocated to the rebate program. Now, the essential point of my amendment is that I do not believe that we should use the tax rebate dollars that we voted to allocate to that program, the 102 million dollars, that we should not use any portion of that 102 million dollars for the option program. We can use the balance of the income tax rebate for that option program, and there is a balance. It's the amount above the 102 million dollars. Currently, as the bill stands, that excess would go into the equalization fund. I don't believe we should take it out of, if you will, the bottom half, the income tax rebate portion that we're going to actually pay out, because I think that we made a valid decision to have that at 102 million dollars. That was based on the amount that was distributed the first year that 1059 was fully implemented. And the other reason that I don't think we should take money away from that program in this way is because we are, in essence, funding a state program, the option program is a state program, with what I think are local resources. The income tax rebate, you recall, is related to 20 percent of the income tax paid by the residents of each school district. Twenty percent of their income tax used to go back to them, now it's going to be a smaller