

those school districts. Their needs stay the same so more school districts will qualify for equalization which is imperative that we keep putting the dollars into equalization so that we actually continue to accomplish the goals that bring those poorer school districts "valuewise" on how we fund education at least "opportunity-wise" able to compete with the other school districts who are in better situations. That's a fair policy and that's what we're trying to do with the bill. With this amendment would actually take away from that. This amendment would take away from equalization so we don't give monies to those schools that are in absolute need compared to others, but it would allow school districts to keep...

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Time.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: ..some more rebate money, which is not acceptable in my view.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Bernard-Stevens. Senator Abboud.

SENATOR ABBOUD: Thank you, Madam President, members. I know this body never changes its mind between General File and Select File or bills that are taken from committee. That's something that we never, ever, ever do, at least that's the argument that I've been hearing. That's ridiculous. Of course we change our mind. When situations change we change our mind, and no particular piece of legislation is so set in stone that it can't be modified during the three courses of debate. Now what has changed since the first time we debated this issue? Well, the change has been the property tax package that came out of the Revenue Committee. The different school districts that were going to have a severe reduction in the amount of money that they were going to be receiving from the state could always rationalize that, well, even though we'll have a reduction in the amount of money that the state is going to be giving us, we could make up that difference by raising our property taxes to ensure that the educational quality of those school districts would remain the same. They do not have that luxury. They do not have that luxury if we pass that property tax package which is bearing down on us. Now, as you recall during this whole lid debate, it started out with 1059. We've always had lids on the schools and last year there was a bill in, I believe it was prioritized by Senator Witek, that continued on with that lid