

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I'd rise to oppose the proposed amendment at this time. The concept that we have talked about from the beginning and this is a process, and the process is one where we establish some goal in terms of levies. The assumption is that before you start to raise additional revenue that first there will be assurances that are perceived or real, whichever it is, or a combination of the two, that those things that can be done to reduce costs have occurred. Now you're never heard.... There are those who argue that there will be no need for any additional revenue when this is put into effect, you have never heard me make that argument. In fact you've heard me make the reverse argument. In all likelihood there would be something, but I also believe that once you start down the route of suggesting fixed dollar amounts or however you might do it that it's going to be made up. That then brings to an end the incentives to really begin to look for ways to become more cost-effective or to get rid of the perception that it can be done to be more cost-effective. And finally the obvious thing is that we can put this in, but it's not going to be binding. This would be a condition, as I understand it, of enactment. We just had a court case here a couple weeks ago said we can't do that. And I believe this will probably hold up the same way. And I can appreciate the desire of Senator Beutler and perhaps everyone to say, well we're going to cover part of this loss. At this point I don't know what level that is appropriate, until this process is gone through, what efficiencies, if any, can be accomplished or cost-effectiveness through consolidation, mergers, a whole series of things that could happen. But I think to suggest at this beginning that this is just another proposal to shift from one tax to another, which you may in part end up in part, but to start off at the beginning, if that's what it is, we'll, as a partial matter, defeat anything being done at all.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Senator Warner. Senator Hillman, followed by Senators Klein and Beutler.

SENATOR HILLMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, members. I'm not going to support the Beutler amendment. But I am going to take the opportunity to talk a little about education, though maybe not K through 12. Kind of like to shift to the debate just a little bit, to look at the differences that there are in the political subdivisions that we're addressing. And one of the ones that I would like to visit with about and Senator Warner would like to