

there are ways for cities and counties to think through this, to fight out of this, to pick up alternatives probably to save themselves with some good restructuring, you know, overall I don't have a lot of concern about those units, I have concerns about individual units but not about their being taken care of as a whole, because the Revenue Committee has been able to get into it far enough that they've really thought those through. But you know they stopped with the schools. What's in this package that helped save the schools? Name me one thing, name me one thing. There's nothing! And the reason there's nothing is because that's the big bite. And somehow we're going to make the decision that we won't talk about the big bite, we'll put the schools at risk. And I'm saying let's put them only half at risk, or two-thirds at risk. Let's put that safety net there, there's no sense in putting the schools at risk of a 30 percent budget reduction that's not otherwise made up in some way. Another part of this bill, this is going back, I should have mentioned this when I was talking about counties, but we're going to take over the county poverty program, right? Big reduction to a lot of the counties, big reduction. And we're paying state funds now, we're going to pay state funds to pick that up. So already we're making provisions for the counties with significant bucks. But what bucks are we putting into the schools right now to help them through this transition? We're not putting anything in. So I will leave it at that and ask the Revenue Committee again to explain why certain provisions have been made for the other political subdivisions, but with respect to the children, who I think are the most important of all, we're going to play this riverboat gambler game and see, and just see in a couple years if maybe we make up the revenues. I, for one,...

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: One minute.

SENATOR BEUTLER: ...don't want to wait and see, I want to do something now so I feel comfortable that the situation, if not handled totally to my liking, at least will be handled in such a way that is minimally acceptable, I think, to you and I and to the people of the state. Thank you.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Senator Beutler. Senator Wickersham, you are recognized at this time.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Thank you, Mr. President. I will...I have