

things happen in my short term in the Legislature. But I'm not going to ask you to do that, even though that's something I personally favor. I think we ought to leave the provisions as they concern the community colleges in 1114 as they are. You've heard, I think, a little bit of the discussion about what might be done with community colleges and their funding structure. I believe there will be a continuing discussion. Whether that discussion results in a common levy that allows them to continue to have access to the property tax base or eventually results in complete state funding, I think is too early to predict. I do favor complete state funding, but I don't want to do it tonight. And I would urge you to vote to oppose in whichever way you choose, Senator Bernard-Stevens amendment.

SENATOR WILL: Thank you, Senator Wickersham. Senator Hillman, on the Bernard-Stevens amendment.

SENATOR HILLMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, thank you. members of the body, just a little bit. I had some of this discussion earlier, but some of you, perhaps, weren't here and I just wanted to touch base a little bit more to point out that community colleges do not have the flexibility nor the opportunities that some of the other political subdivisions have. And the debate that's gone on about voters being able to exceed the levy limit, which in the case of community colleges, being a regional area, it's just not reasonable to assume that would happen at all when you've got seventeen or twenty-six counties that would have to do that. Consolidation, those kinds of things can't happen with community colleges. Many of them are restructuring, gone to distance learning, two-on-two programs, have done some very innovative things to be able to make, I think, some very fine education accessible to many young people and that nontraditional student, by the way, clean across the state. As Senator Wickersham mentioned, he sponsored and I cosponsored some legislation earlier, and that was to look at, as he said, state funding the community colleges. And as a result of that, Senator Wickersham and I, we're...had some very lively discussions with groups of community colleges across the state and the one in our district. But I think it's, the community colleges are a peculiar political subdivision in this particular bill. And I think it is important that we look at what it is that we're going to do and how we are going to affect their future. And having said that, Senator Bernard-Stevens, I would yield the rest of my time to you if you would like to finish.