

past, and that is that, again, to reiterate, where we've moved on this issue on the continuum of, you know, no rebate at all, which was my original position on the bill this year and which I still actually maintain. If I could wave a magic wand, I would say that we ought not to have a rebate any more. It was a system that I thought had some promise. We've had six years of it. I do not favor the rebate anymore. But we've moved from that to one where we capped it at 80 million to now it's 100 million dollars and this, in all probability, would raise that level and go back and, you know, again, based on the discussion we had yesterday, I don't think ..I think if anything we're, in future years, they're going to have to make this formula more equalizing as opposed to less equalizing and the impact of the Abboud amendment, as he indicated, would be to take money that would have gone to equalization and put it into rebate. Let me just give a little information because I know Senator...and Senator Abboud's doing what a good senator from a district should do. That's not implying he's not a good senator. I mean he is a good senator and he's doing what a good senator should do and that is he's defending the interest of his district. But let me just, for other people, he has talked about District 66, Omaha Westside. Nobody debates as to whether they have a quality education program. The question is what do they spend on that program versus what they pay in taxes, and because District 66 is a wealthy district and they have one of the lower property tax rates in the Omaha area, but they are able to spend 40 percent above the average with a lower than average property tax rate. They are able to pay their teachers an average salary, as of this document, '93-94,...

PRESIDENT ROBAK: One minute.

SPEAKER WITHEM: ..46,765 dollars, staff salaries in District 66, fourth highest in the state. They have 382,000 dollars per pupil. They were able, for '96-97 contract settlements, they settled for a 4 percent increase with their teachers. They're already fourth highest in the state. They have a 4 percent increase where other school districts are in the 2 to 3 percent level. Yeah, they do have a quality program.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Time.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Other people in the state ought to be able to have that and that's why we need equalization.