

I've heard a lot of debate that voters truly understood that what they were voting on in...when they supported keeping 1059 in place was the concept of equalization, and I think it was partly the concept of equalization but also the concept of the income tax rebate, and now we're going to break faith with the voters on the income tax rebate. And the other thing that really concerns me, and it concerns me about all school districts and not just about nonequalization school districts, is that the money that comes back in the form of an income tax rebate is an automatic rebate as it currently stands. The money in the equalization formula is appropriated. If, by some chance the Jaksha petition would get on the ballot and be passed, we're also going to have a state cap. When it comes down to it, are we going to appropriate the full amount? Even districts that are equalization districts are taking a real risk in breaking faith with the voters on the income tax rebate because that money is not going...is no longer going to be automatic. There is no longer going to be an automatic rebate to the district. And so it's a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush and so the...we may be doing something that in the long term we're going to really regret in an attempt to solve a very real problem. But I wonder how many times in the past we have dealt with state aid at a time that we're not really looking at additional resources, we are just looking at shifting those resources. Senator Withem spoke of Westside, that it's a very rich district, but it has \$1.29 levy; that's the same mill levy that Papillion-LaVista has. What I look at is the number of schools that are below \$1.00 in levy and still receive equalization and are we getting what we want, which what I want is an improvement in quality and that's what we've...we've...I've certainly heard enough about it on the floor, but I don't know if we're really getting it if we're subsidizing schools that are holding down their property tax at the expense of it improving quality of programs. And I have to agree with a lot of the things that Senator Abboud has said. There have been choices made in a district that can afford to make choices. I agree with that. Those choices, though, have been about improving the quality of education for children, things like early childhood education and full-day kindergarten and foreign language in the elementary schools, and those are choices that I would hope that we are encouraging all school districts to make. And if we're supporting school districts that have a less than \$1.00 levy through equalization, I don't see how we can say we're doing that, that we're improving