

continue to have the conversations with the people who are going to be making the votes. This is not just about local governing boards and what they do; this is about the future of children. I...I had an original amendment, which spoke more specifically to reductions in administration, and it specified things like reductions, to consider first reductions in middle management, administrative travel, memberships, and lobbying, and the administrators and lobbyists reacted rather strongly to this, and so I substituted (AM)3922 because it is not my intention to pit administrators versus teachers, but my response to the administrators and lobbyists, who were concerned, is that my concern is that children grow up prepared to be administrators, lobbyists, and even state senators, and so what we have to do is to continue to have the dialogue so that what we are doing protects them as much as possible. And I say that realizing that 80 percent of budgets are salaries, and so this is not meant to be seen as only as being about teachers but I want it to be about children, and I want to continue having the discussion about children. There was a district that just announced some layoffs due to very necessary cutbacks, and those layoffs were seven teachers and one custodian. And the layoffs tended to be teachers that deal with the very youngest children, which is something that I see as the most significant area for investment. That's...they are the ones that are the most dependent on our educational system. And so I do believe that we need to state our intent, that children should be protected as much as possible, and that the cutbacks need to be looked at organizationally. People have criticized the amendment a little bit because of...that it...because it might take away local control, but I believe that if we are willing to tell districts what their budget can be, then I think we should be willing to tell them that we have some intent about protecting children in this whole process. And I am already seeing those districts struggle and some of it, some of the struggle I believe is positive and I think it will result in some innovations. I think the issue that Senator Janssen brought up about excluding early retirement from the lid is a real important idea because I think that does give administrators some flexibility, and as long as it's permissive, I don't think we'll lose the very best of our administra...I mean of our teachers through that. It will just...the people who...who really want to stay are going to be the people who are really good teachers, and they will stay, but as I said before, I believe that this is a positive amendment. It has been agreed to by all the different sides,