

let this be a local decision. It's certainly a lot more harmonious when that takes place. Your bill has some merit. There's a lot of small K-12 districts out there in small communities who are thinking about reverting to a Class I district, and this amendment would take away that option. I don't know whether it's Loomis, or who it is, but they're talking about, well, we'd still like to have a school in our town, and we really have enough students for a grade school, but we maybe don't have enough for a high school. I know the Class I that I live in has about 55 students, and we like having it there, and we'd like to keep it there and would like for your consideration doing so. In the future, if you'd like to work on this issue, I'd be glad to be of some assistance to you, but I hope you don't have enough votes today to move this on.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Schrock. Senator Withem.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Madam President, members of the body, I'm going to be very brief on this topic. It's one, obviously, I've had a lot of experience with. And at this point today I told Senator Wesely that I would not be able to vote for his amendment. I don't think the issue is timely, nor do I think that he necessarily has the best solution. But I applaud him for bringing the issue forward. And the reason I applaud him is because I think it is vitally important for... particularly for those members of the Legislature who represent areas of the state where there is a lot of property and where property taxes are the biggest problem, to realize that for an overall solution to this problem this issue needs to be addressed, the issue of school district organization needs to be addressed, hopefully not in a vindictive fashion or from a top-down approach, hopefully by people in the state recognizing they need to be more efficient. I view what we're doing with LB 1114 and 299 and the other bills is really beginning a journey that will last a number of years, that will get us to a situation where school districts, cities and counties are spending less money on services. Ultimately the state may be looking at rethinking our share of the funding of all of those programs. But a component that is lacking in Senator Wesely's amendment brings us to it, the component that is lacking is are we going to be able to continue this same type of organizational structure? I say we're not going to be able to, particularly if those of you with a lot of property in your areas are going to be looking to the state to help pick up some of the cost. We are going to be