

March 25, 1996

LB 299  
LR 206

saying to you, make sure you can deliver those costs in a more cost-effective fashion. So what I think Senator Wesely is doing is bringing this issue before us as a reality check, that as we think through this overall problem a more efficient system of delivering education in our state has to be part of the price that is paid. But at this point I would not be able to adopt the specific solution he brings before us, and I don't know if he really expects us to, or not. I think the service he's providing is making sure we all know that it is definitely a part of the picture. With that, Senator Wesely, if you have any need for more time, I would yield the rest of my time to you.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Senator Wesely, there is two and a half minutes remaining.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Senator Withem. And you're exactly right. I raise this issue because during the study that we did, the LR 206 study I believe, I consistently raised the point that we were not doing enough in the education side; that we were seeing efforts in Health and Human Services, Judiciary, and across the board, and we had undertaken preliminary steps in Education. I admire that, the incentives, the positive things that were being talked about. But my point has consistently been that if we want to deal with property taxes, you have to deal with schools. And if you're going to significantly reduce the cost of the schools, you have to significantly change the school system that we have in place. There is too much expense involved in the proliferation of small districts and the administrative costs that go along with that. And whether you like it or not, whether you agree with it or not, it's a reality, and that's exactly what I'm saying. If we put in the levy limits and the budget lids that we're talking about, if the petition drives are successful that are being talked about, what I am proposing to you will be the minimum that will be talked about. There will be even more severe changes in terms of the school system, as a result of that. It will be inevitable. So the discussion today is a precursor of the sort of discussion that will come later. And I appreciated Senator Hillman, Senator Beutler, Senator Elmer, and others who have talked about recognizing the need to look at this issue. Others who object to this amendment I think also acknowledge that there is a problem that needs to be addressed. I'm saying that it's been back burner we needed to bring to the front burner and recognize that...