

colleges, how essential for that to work. For welfare reform to work, we must have strong community colleges who have the funding available to make sure when that student, when that very oftentimes that woman walks on to campus, that those support programs can be there in order for her to make that two-year time line. They are absolutely important in that partnership and I am a very strong supporter of this amendment, in the addition, putting the money back to the community colleges. Thank you, Senator Bernard-Stevens.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Bernard-Stevens.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Senator Bohlke, for those comments. To close I would simply like to add that one of the things Senator Hillman commented to was that everything was fully funded, but that's not correct because if you look at the university and others, they were funded at the 4 percent level where the community colleges were only at the 3 percent level. But that's really not the discussion today. Where Senator Hillman and I disagree is where she would say that this is not a property tax issue because we haven't done the property tax package yet. I don't think there's anyone in the body that understands we're not going to pass that property tax package in one form or another. And that package will put a tremendous cap on the community colleges' ability to collect revenues. It'll put a spending cap on them. All this does is treat the community colleges as the other ones in higher education does. But even more essential, it puts them at just a little bit higher level so when those caps come in, it's not going to be as desperate of a problem as it is going to be with the community colleges. And I agree, we're going to have to come back and find out, in the next couple years, how we're going to handle the \$54 million of the community colleges after we do the property tax. But this, for the most part, gets it up to where it's fair. And I would appreciate the body's support. Thank you.

SPEAKER WITHEM: You've heard the closing. The question is the adoption of the Bernard-Stevens amendment. All of those in favor vote aye, opposed vote nay.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, if we could have a call of the house and...at this point, please.