

wanted to look at it. It, basically, says, each county board shall, before a particular point in time, examine the question of consolidation. I am oversimplifying a little bit, but that's the gist of it, and it says the examination shall include a public hearing and a fiscal estimate of property tax savings, if any, anticipated by consolidation. So we, in this...in this area, we are already encouraging counties, who are one of our institutions that really need to look at consolidation, we are encouraging them to do that, not requiring them to consolidate, but really asking them to take a serious look by going through some process to do that. Now with this amendment, the only thing this amendment does is add school districts to the paragraph, and to ask them, just as we are asking the counties, to have a public hearing and to look and to do a fiscal impact of property tax savings, to look at the districts around them, and go through a serious process of considering whether consolidation with one or another of those contiguous districts would not be good public policy and good for them in terms of property tax savings. It seems to me that we've already required the counties to do this. But, you know, it's even more important that we require the schools to do it than the counties, because in this whole tax package, the counties, through one mechanism or another, are probably going to be able to take care of themselves, to protect and to continue to do most of the functions that they do. But you all are very much aware, by this point in time, that with respect to the school districts, through the combination of the expenditure lid and the levy cap, we are forcing a violent reduction in the amount of property taxes that are available to them, and, at the same time, this is what is different from the other parts of the package, as I view it, at the same time, we are not replacing any of that. You know that's the central, key concept, the discrepancy, I guess, that bothers me about the package, which otherwise is a super, super package. In any event, part of the expressed rationale as to why we are not replacing these revenues is that, by golly, we're going to get some efficiencies out of this system and we are going to insist that the school system, itself, work for those efficiencies. Now in some districts, those efficiencies, those efficiencies, I suppose, can come in different ways, and every school district will have to work in all ways possible. But, certainly, in terms of a macroview of the system, to the extent that there are going to be truly significant savings on efficiencies, and I am talking about something more than 5 or 10 percent, you are not going to