

county, in other words, the baseline levy, if you will. It provides an opportunity, if counties wish to take it, for state funding of one of their activities, the county assessor. It is, essentially, a bill that deals with counties. Senator Beutler now wishes to expand the bill so it deals, in some respect, with schools. Should we also expand the bill so it deals, in some respect, with community colleges, with NRDs, with ESUs, with cemetery districts, with airport authorities, with drainage districts, with all of the other folks that might also be examining the issue of whether or not they could achieve efficiencies through consolidation? I don't think so. LB 1085 is, essentially, a county-directed bill and I think we ought to maintain that much of the focus in 1085. The other issue is whether or not the school districts won't be doing this without the kind of prompting that is in Senator Beutler's amendment. You have bills already being considered that remove disincentives for consolidation, that provide incentives for consolidation. If LB 1050 doesn't generate some discussion of consolidation, I will eat my hat. There are so many pieces of legislation and factors that are out there already that if you are a thoughtful school board member, you will be doing what Senator Beutler is going to command that you do with his amendment. I don't think it's appropriate to place that additional commandment at the school level. I think the reactions to Senator Beutler's amendment would be quite negative, as a matter of fact, and that the reaction would be simply that you are going to cost me money to file a report with you that I don't know what you are going to do with and, essentially, it is still my decision, as a local elected official, about whether or not that is wise in my school district. And I may have things that mitigate against what you think the objective is, other than just simply the fiscal impact. It is a much more complex decision for me, as a member of the school board, or myself, as a taxpayer, to decide the issue of whether or not my school should be consolidated with another school. But you aren't asking me about those things. You are only asking me about the dollars, and the dollars may be important, but they aren't the only thing. So please don't burden me with another report that I don't know what you are going to do with, and it costs me a lot of money to generate and, ultimately, becomes maybe the least important of my considerations. I don't think we ought to adopt Senator Beutler's amendment. Thank you.