

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Bernard-Stevens. Is there any further discussion on the Beutler amendment? Seeing none, Senator Beutler, to close.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Madam Lieutenant Governor, members of the Legislature, again what the amendment does is allow for a vote of the people that could take them as far as a period of ten years instead of a period of five years beyond the levy...or without the levy cap. And one of my major concerns with this whole tax package that we're doing is that it might have the effect with respect to the schools, the overall effect as it will play out of really discouraging quality education. And that's going to be very upsetting to certain populations if...if they're not allowed to do themselves, if they are not allowed themselves to improve the quality of education in their area above what might be average. And I'm sure that each and every one of you will have some school districts in your area who are going to want to do a little more. They feel that strongly about education. And, you know, they ought to be allowed to do that without being punished financially, without being punished by the burden of excessive numbers of elections which are expensive in and of themselves. It's true that the longer they reach out beyond five years to six or to seven, probably the less likely the people are to approve it. But on the other hand, ought not that to be their choice? Ought not they to decide and put to the people whatever they think is the most sensible thing to do? And if the people reject it, the people reject it. But at least you're not caught up in a cycle where...where in a certain area, for example, they might want to consistently do ten cents or fifteen cents above what is the common mill levy. The people of that area just might feel that that's how much better they want to do on a consistent basis. And do they have to vote every five years to be able to do that? I think that's just a little much, and I think it's more reasonable to say, leave it to local control, because it is a vote of the people in the end. Leave it to local control and allow them to at least do it up to a ten year period. That's really all this amendment is about, and the taxpayers, to the extent that they're binding anybody or binding themselves, it ought to be their choice, and I'll belabor it no longer. Thank you.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Beutler. Now, the question