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we do not act, those students are the ones who suffer the consequences. What is impact if we do not restore the 22 million? What implications will that hold for school board members preparing budgets for the 1999-2000 school year? The amount of aid that was certified in December of 1997 was 591 million. If we deduct the 22 million, that amount certified for 1999-2000 school year will be 574 million. Our basic support for education has actually decreased. If schools have to work for ways of making up the \$22 million loss during their next budgeting process, it can be...only come from further cuts or by asking for an increase in a levy that produces higher property taxes, which is counter to our original goal. The goal of the initiatives...

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: One minute.

SENATOR BOHLKE: ...is to reduce reliance on property tax and reduce spending. The Education Committee believes 149 will keep us on that course. It was certainly not my desire to be before you with such a bill as 149. As much as I regret it, I can tell you it doesn't hold a candle to the undesirable effects our superintendents, board members, and teachers will suffer, and, most of all, the children in the classroom. Life can be understood by looking backward, but it must be lived by looking forward. We have an opportunity to understand what happened to schools by looking backward, but I feel our opportunity this session is to look forward and to ensure the future of the schools. As discussion progresses, I will be able to present you with the facts on how schools have cut costs. It is up to us to draw the line between asking them to be efficient and pushing them into being ineffective. Personally, I believe the first draw on the state budget should be the proper funding of our schools. If schools are underfunded next year, we will pay in enumerable ways in the future. As you know, a child typically only has one chance to be in kindergarten, one chance to be in first grade, and one chance to learn the basics introductions in second and third grade. If we fail to act and neglect our obligation, the result may be increased spending in later years, repairing the consequences of poorly funded schools. Yes, this is a tall order, but one I know collectively we can meet. The desire to reduce spending by underfunding our schools is foolish. As you've heard me say, a Chinese proverb