

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

February 17, 1999 LB 67

waives closing. We are voting on the committee amendments to LB 67. Have you all voted? We are voting on the committee amendments to LB 67. Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 27 ayes, 0 nays on adoption of committee amendments.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: The committee amendments are adopted. Is there a debate on the advancement of LR...LB 67? Senator Kristensen, I see no lights. Do you wish to close on the advancement of LB 67?

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Mr. President, I do want to take a period of time to close here and to let the body know, and understand part of this is going to be the Senator Roger Wehrbein speech, the bill does have a fiscal note to it. It also has a very serious problem that we have to address. That's what the Legislature's here for. The fiscal note you're going to see is somewhere in the neighborhood of \$800,000 to build that base year in '97-98 so that Western can access the other state aid formulas that they're entitled to. Yes, it is money. Yes, it's going to have to fall in line. It's not going to get passed before other...before the budget bill. It's going to fall into that list and there's probably a dozen bills out here that we're going to have to make difficult decisions. I don't know what else Senator Wehrbein would have said. I don't think he would have said no, no, no, but maybe he would. But the real issue and the real problem to be solved here is, what are we going to do with Western Community College? And we have come to the point they have...they've done a lot of different things out there. Quite frankly, they did the courageous thing in 1997 and 1998 and I want to publicly thank them for hearing the message about the property tax and the levy limits. They could have raised property taxes and nobody, nobody would have cared except those taxpayers, and they chose not to do it. They did the...they did the right thing by not increasing the property tax, but by not doing that they then put themselves in jeopardy. And when we change the state aid formula and we knew at that point in time that Western was going to have some difficulties, but valuation base, student enrollment have all put them at risk. And if we want to keep Western Community College, LB 67 is the only vehicle that we'll be able to use, and it's the cheapest vehicle to use to keep them in existence. And, with