

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
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149. That's not the issue. The issue is, who really are the stewards and what really is your job here as a state legislator towards the state budget. You take your yellow budget book that the Appropriations Committee gave you to, the handout. If you'd turn to page 13, I know that you may not have it right here with you, but I want to do a little bit of math for you, if you take the state aid to education amounts, that's \$567 million this year...584 million, excuse me, and you take Medicaid and public assistance, which are the other two major players, that's the second largest portion of our state budget, that accounts for almost one-half of the state budget is on automatic pilot, one-half of the state budget. That means that if we have an economic downturn, if we have short monies, half of the budget you're not going to be able to touch. So where do you go? Are you going to go down and cut it out of the courts? Well, that doesn't get you a whole lot, but you probably can't take those out. Those are constitutional issues. Are you going to take them out of the prison? Probably not. That's another \$90 million. Are you going to take them away from developmental disabilities? Probably not. Where do you go? Well, you can go to the university. Most of that's contract salaries, though. That's about 85 percent. It becomes a very difficult proposition. Who does watch the state budget? What is your ultimate role? This amendment, what it does is says that we certify the state aid figure; this is what schools are going to get. At the end of the legislative session, if we need to cut and we, in the mainline budget, appropriate something less for state aid to schools than what was certified, that those numbers will be recertified and that's what the school districts will get. What does that mean? That means that the automatic pilot, if things are bad, you can flip that off and you can do your first obligation, I suggest to you it is your first obligation, is you're stewards of the state budget. You are not stewards of every local school district's budget. You're stewards of the state budget first. You've done tremendous things for school districts and we're going to do more. But when economic bad times come, and they're going to come, we...it's been easy to do these things because we've had money. It's going to change. It may not change this year, maybe not next year, I think it will, but economic bad times are going to come and this body's going to be forced to look at cuts. Why do I do this on 149 right now? Because it may be your last opportunity to effectively do