

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

March 10, 1999 LB 149

this. State aid is extremely important. When we talked about the first round of debate of this bill, we talked about property tax relief. Those are the levy limitations. When we get into a position where you're going to be forced to look for cuts, the first response is, well, we can do 25 votes; we can do anything in the Legislature. You can. But think about the situation you're going to be in at that point in time. Are you going to be able to pass a statute that does this and then cut the money? It will never happen. It will never happen. You're in a...you're in a special session the last seven days to come in here. Are you going to spend those first seven days and change the statute and then work to reduce those numbers? It won't happen; as a practical matter, it won't. The good times won't last forever. What this is really all about is who is going to pay attention to the state budget when we run short. The other items that I think need to be discussed a little bit this morning is, is this a controversial amendment? Sure, it's controversial, but it's one that we all talk about but nobody wants to face. Is state aid untouchable? Should it be untouchable? And there are those that are going to argue, well, there's lots of other untouchable things. This is high on the list. This is very, very important to do. At some point in time, you're going to be faced...and you're going to look at the Appropriations Committee and you're going to say, Appropriations Committee, you go...you go figure out the answer, you go out for us. And they're going to come back with the answer, where do we cut; where do we go? And they will run through, only in better detail and much more articulately than I just did, of the problems that you face if you take half the state budget and take it off the table. There is some legitimate arguments on both sides. The other side to this is, well, look, if you're going to jack us down to a dollar levy limit and now you're going to cut our state aid at the last moment, that creates instability; what am I going to do; what do you expect the school districts to do? And I suggest to you there's a second element that works here and that second element, that I'm very willing to do, is that you can allow them, in those circumstances, and I call them, in effect, an emergency circumstance, when the state budget is at such a shape that you need to cut those budgets, you should allow them room under their levy limit to make up that difference. Now I'm not talking about removing the levy limit. I'm talking about if our