

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
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open on your amendment to the Kristensen amendment to LB 149.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Thank you, Mr. President. This amendment should have been released on your device or gadget, as Senator Chambers would call it, and it is also being distributed to you in hard copy. Obviously, I would have filed it yesterday and made it more widely available had I been aware of what we were going to be discussing today. The amendment does what Senator Kristensen suggested would be necessary or appropriate in the event we did not appropriate the amount of money called for in the February 1st certification that is call...that is provided for in LB 149. What the amendment does is provide an exception to the levy limits for the difference between the amount certified on February 1st and the amount we finally certify. What does that mean? It means that if the schools had to go back to the property tax base because we wouldn't keep our commitments to K-12 education, that they would go back to property taxes. They have no place else to go. Within the framework that we have imposed on them, they have no place else to go. And if we won't keep our commitments, at least we ought to be honest about it and say that we know what the impact of failure to keep our commitment is, and that is higher property taxes. We ought to recognize that that is what Senator Kristensen's amendment is about and not play games with our constituents. Senator Kristensen's amendment is about the potential for higher property taxes if we do not keep our commitments. Now, I'm going to ask you to vote for the amendment to the amendment even though I don't like it, but I think it's the only fair way that we can frame our discussion this morning. And even if the amendment to the amendment is adopted, I'm not going to support Senator Kristensen's amendment because I will not vote to reverse the course that we have set to reduce our reliance on property taxes. I will not vote to do that. And at its most fundamental, that is what the Kristensen amendment is about. It is cloaked in terms of budgetary discretion, prioritizing. Fine, I've set my priority. My priority is the reduction and the continued reduction on the reliance on property taxes in this state. I'll set that priority. I'll keep that priority. I will do what is necessary to maintain that as a priority. And if things get so bad that some time in some way I have to change that commitment, I will do that as a deliberate act. I will do that because of a bill