

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
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you that, if you recall, last year we had a bill that was called the Mitigation Funds. And we were attempting to give assistance to a number of small schools. At that time Senator Coordsen had that bill, and he and I had worked diligently to try and find a way that that would really be appropriate and give some small schools in those crisis situations some assistance. As it turned out, very little, not much of that money from the Mitigation Fund was actually used. I had said at that time that I thought that that particular bill was missing, possibly missing the target of what we were really trying to do, because as the Education Committee had been around the state listening to what seemed to us, to the Education Committee, very legitimate concerns from smaller schools, it happened to be when there would be a particular impact on schools that have a smaller budget, but would have something that was unforeseen that they could not control impact their schools. And so we bring you 314, that would allow a mechanism that we will be explaining for that assistance to come forward. Very likely that assistance may be in a loan, in a majority of the cases, that they would eventually pay back. But we're using the amount of money left over that was from that Mitigation Fund the last year and not expended. Before I go into further detail, which I can do on the committee amendments, I want to tell you that Senator Cudaback has prioritized the bill. I think that he has said there's nothing more important than addressing a crisis situation for a school. And so I would also tell you that we have...many times those crisis situations have been errors that have been made by assessors, other situations, of which those schools really have no control. Now if you have a very large budget, you may be able to absorb those errors in one year. But this bill says if it impacts over 10 percent of your budget or 3 times the cost grouping cost per students, which would be about \$13,000, that they would be able to take that to the commissioner, and the Commissioner of Education would be able to make that determination. But, with that, I'd like to give the balance of my time to Senator Cudaback and thank him again for prioritizing this bill.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN PRESIDING

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Senator Cudaback.