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LB 179

SENATOR BROMM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to respond to one of Senator Wickersham's questions that he posed. And he posed the question, if we vote for this amendment are we saying we don't have the money for any property tax relief? Or are we sending another message that we don't think that the money should necessarily be spent all with this property tax relief? And I want to clarify where I'm at on it at least. I am going to support the amendment. I was uncomfortable on General File, even though I was supportive of the level to which we were taking the...this portion of the bill in terms of the value of property that would qualify and the value of homes that would qualify. And so my vote will be cast with the idea that I think this is an appropriate change to make in the homestead law. But my vote is not intended to send a message to the Revenue Committee that other property tax relief or that we don't have any other money for property tax relief, whether we shouldn't spend any more money on property tax relief, that's not my intent when I cast my vote. I also think it's a very hard decision for retired folks and older folks as to when to decide that their home is no longer appropriate. My mother lived in her own home until two weeks before she died, last fall, and she was 94 years old and drove her own car, and I think that's absolutely wonderful. I can tell you that had my mother lived in a \$150,000 home she would have had to downsize. She might have still been able to live in her own home, but it would not have been able to have been a \$150,000 home. And I...I mean, any of us might face those kinds of decisions some day. But I don't think we can structure...we can't structure our safety net, our tax policy, our social program of a homestead exemption to necessarily allow a certain price range of home to qualify. It won't...the whole program will eventually collapse if we try and make it too all-encompassing. It will eventually collapse because we won't be able to sustain it. So I think we need to make incremental changes, we need to recognize certainly the effects of some inflation and that some income levels need to change as times change, just as social security has an incremental change and a lot of other things. But...and so I'm more comfortable with the bill with this amendment for the reasons that I've stated, and I will certainly support it. Thank you.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Suttle.