

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

April 5, 2000

LB 1138

be interested in, because the underlying principle of this bill is equalization. And I think I've heard Senator Beutler tirelessly work for equalization in schools. Tirelessly, because that was the fair thing to do. And I've even supported Senator Beutler in those efforts to bring equalization and proper distribution of state monies to schools. So isn't it odd, isn't it odd that now we find a person who used to be committed to equalization who all of a sudden is saying, oh, maybe I'm not that committed, maybe I'm not that committed. And isn't it odd, isn't it odd that someone would suggest to you that we can't decide how much money to put into a fund. What we've always done with the state aid pools for counties, municipalities and NRDs is appropriate a sum of money into those funds that could still occur, Senator Beutler. I think, to suggest that we could not change that number by appropriating an amount to the fund is inexact. I think that even if the bill passes, as we're suggesting it be passed, that that is still what would, in fact, happen in the Appropriations Committee. That is what would happen in the Appropriations Committee. Some amount of money would be appropriated, it would be brought to the floor and then there would be a discussion of the amount of the appropriation. Is there a black hole in Appropriations? Is that the place where the amount of money that's supposed to go into one of these funds is supposed to be determined? Should that be the black hole rather than some other process that we might employ? I don't think one black hole is better than another one necessarily, but I do think that it is appropriate that we consider increasing the funds in these pools as time goes on; otherwise, the effect of the pool itself is eroded. That has always been the history of these aid pools, even when they started out to be aid pools for the replacement of dollars lost to various political subdivisions when we removed inventory and various items of personal property from taxation in the late sixties, early seventies. That's the origin of these funds. And then over time, the state didn't keep its commitments and didn't increase the funding. In fact, they found out early on that they could not keep their commitments and froze the funds and made other changes over time that were not in keeping with the original commitment made those many years ago. So having the Legislature not keep its statutory commitments, or even the commitments that we might...