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childcare subsidy and other individual assistance programs. The total price tag this year is \$535 million, or 20 percent of the total budget. Medicaid, the state and federal healthcare program for low-income seniors, the disabled, and for children, is the largest component of this category at three-quarters of the total. The complete elimination of aid to individuals for one year, of course not a possibility, would not balance this budget. Aid to local governments is \$905 million, or 35 percent of the budget, and includes state aid to schools, special education funding, and aid to counties, cities, and NRDs. State aid to schools is \$647 million, or 71 percent of this category. Entirely eliminating state aid for one year would nearly cover the shortfall, but obviously we will not head in this direction. The final category is higher education, including the university, state colleges, community colleges, and student financial aid, which received \$521 million, or 20 percent of this year's budget. The complete elimination of funding for higher education for one year, another impossibility, would not balance this budget. Now, consider the reverse side of the picture, as well as our constitutional obligation to finance General Fund spending without incurring debt. Over my objection last year, the Legislature approved a mostly temporary general tax increase. During debate on this issue, a number of senators made it clear that they would not support an extension of these tax increases, and some senators who supported the tax increases have left the Unicameral. It is a different Legislature that considers these issues. But if this Legislature made those temporary tax increases permanent, an estimated \$247 million would be generated over the next two years, a large part of that in the second year, not the first. That's only about one-third of the current budget gap. Even if the Legislature took this step, more than \$425 million in spending reductions would still be required to balance this budget. Again, if we consider deficit requests and the possible judgment from the low-level radioactive waste lawsuit, that number climbs back to about \$600 million. Furthermore, recognize that deficit spending, the often-used solution at the federal level, is not an option for Nebraska. Our founders made sure that every generation would live within its means. Article XIII of the Nebraska Constitution very specifically limits the power of the state to incur debt for the purpose of financing more spending, or to