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Chair. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Vrtiska. Senator Hartnett on the Brashear amendment, AM1477, to AM1445.

SENATOR HARTNETT: Mr. President and members of the body, I am one of the members (laugh), it wasn't five, within the Revenue Committee, that supported Senator Brashear's amendment in committee. And basically, I had another bill, which is...I think is still sitting there, or maybe it's killed, or will be killed, if we (laugh) ever meet again, that would simply raise the levy back up to \$1.10. We did the...we did lower the levy from \$1.10 to \$1.00 when we had lots of money. It has cost the state \$100 million a year to go back to school districts, basically. We've let school board...and I'm an ex-school board member. We've let school board members off the hook. They come for us...they depend upon us. They've got to have it. And so I think it's...we have not done...it hasn't worked. And so I...that's why I support it. Also, another thing that's happened, as we have lowered the property tax, guess what has happened? Our political subdivisions say, oh, you only pay \$1.00? You can pay \$1.10, or whatever the number is, it...I think our...I think what remember with serving on the Revenue Committee with Senator Warner, I think his idea was that we, overall, with the cities and the counties and the school district, we should have a levy around \$2.00. And that was the plan. That's why we went from \$1.00 down to \$1.10. But what is happening on the local level? I want to read something from a report that was done by our Revenue Committee. Property tax relief in Nebraska progress since 1995. And it was by the staff, September 2001, under the former Chairman, Senator Wickersham. What is happening at the local level? A trend towards increased use of property tax for school bonds and building funds offset some of the reductions used in property tax for school general funds operation. During the five-year period of 1995 to 2000, school bond property tax grew from \$54 million a year to nearly \$88 million a year, a growth of 60 percent, or about 12 percent per year. Now, maybe the schools needed these buildings. Maybe the schools needed to do this. But I think as we lower the property tax, or as we, with taking over more of the function, we cause property tax going,