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often when we face problems we take the easy way out. He said, and I agree with him, from now on when we're confronted with a problem we can't just throw money at it; we have to solve the problem. Well, friends, state aid is the number one, Exhibit A, classic example of throwing more money at a problem instead of solving it. We keep trying to find ways to feed the beast. I support the expansion of the sales tax base, but we're also talking about raising cigarette taxes, raising alcohol taxes, making permanent the income tax hike that we promised was going to be temporary last year. We're clearing the way for possible property tax hikes and all of that still doesn't get us where we need to be budgetwise. It still doesn't solve the problem. Now Senator Beutler presented a more ambitious scenario that works on paper, but I contend that that still does not solve the problem. It's time to solve the problem. It's time to eliminate state aid and create a new K-12 funding system with spending growth tied to inflation. And we don't have to figure this whole thing out right now and I want to emphasize that. I've got my plan here, latest version of it. You've got copies of it. We can talk about it if you want to, but this is not the focus today. I felt obligated to provide some kind of a blueprint for the future, but this is all to be worked out over the next year. The only thing I'm suggesting we do today, but what I think we have to do today, is eliminate funding for state aid in the second year of this budget. I think we have to do it. We have to put the marker out there right now. Otherwise, the change in K-12 funding is never going to happen. The problem will not be solved until we put the pressure on ourselves and the state's educators to come up with a new system. We do that by cutting the cord right now and saying, no funding for state aid in Fiscal Year '04-05. I want to conclude my opening with an appeal to people inside and outside the Chamber...

**SPEAKER BROMM:** One minute.

**SENATOR MAXWELL:** ...who think, state aid, that's not my issue; I don't want to get involved in that mess. State aid is everybody's issue. Are you a business advocate, worried about the growing pressure to get revenue from all kinds of taxes? If you're a champion for children or the disabled or any social