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FLOOR DEBATE

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low-income kids. And during the hearing on LB 574, we talked about how there are some curriculums in this state that are available only at private or not...or these, you know, the private colleges that the PEAP and the SSAP money goes to. And my question is, and I asked Senator Chambers this during the hearing, I'm sure he'll recall, what happens if a low-income individual decides they want to pursue a particular course of study that's available only at Creighton or Wesleyan or one of these institutions? Should we deny them the ability to go to college and pursue that particular course of study because we don't think that these PEAP monies or SSAP monies, whatever acronym you want to call them, should be available to be used at Wesleyan or Creighton? I don't think that's right. Senator Schimek made a very good argument that we should fund, as our constitution says, our public universities first and then the Legislature may fund after that. My problem with Senator Chambers' amendment is that it strikes all funding for the PEAP program now. So we have an individual who has decided to go to Wesleyan University or Creighton or wherever, and, yes, the tuition is more expensive there. We take this money from them for the next year. What do they do then? What about the kid, the low-income kid, and again if I'm wrong, that these monies are available only to low income, please correct me, but that's as I understand it. What if this low-income kid decides that they want to pursue this particular course of study that's available only at Creighton or Wesleyan, and we take this money away from them, rather than do it on a phase-in basis as Senator Raikes is amending; what is that kid supposed to do then? So when Senator Chambers says that the dilemma that we have to make here today is the budget versus PEAP, I disagree with him.

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR BOURNE: I respectfully disagree with him. The choice we have to make today is the budget versus these low-income kids who have chosen to go to a particular institution for a higher education. Again, I oppose Senator Chambers' amendment. He says there's no compelling reason. I disagree with that. I think there's a very compelling reason, and I think that Senator Raikes, should we choose to go that route, his approach makes more sense to allow these kids, once they've entered into these