

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

April 30, 2003 LB 622

committee amendments, as stated by the Clerk. Senator Landis, Chairman of the Revenue Committee, you're recognized to open on them.

SENATOR LANDIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature. We did endorse LB 622, which provided apparently, in essence, a minimum levy obligation for a county before they would get this kind of an aid. On the other hand, we also decided that the needs of the state were sufficiently great and the basis for which this money was being given was iffy enough that we should defer any aid under the program for the next fiscal biennium. Now the amount of aid that flows out through this program is \$4.5 million a year, so this winds up being a committee amendment that, in essence, cuts an aid program by \$9 million. I understand it has been adopted by the Appropriations Committee, and it is part of their thinking or their analysis, when they tell us that we are at 355 for a hole, that hole includes the savings in this committee amendment of \$9 million. I would ask for the adoption of the Revenue Committee amendment, AM0854.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Landis. You've heard the opening on the Revenue Committee amendments. Senator Landis, did you wish...you did have your light on. Did you mean to? He passes that. Senator Vrtiska, followed by Senator Jones.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. When I first saw this particular piece of legislation I was obviously quite concerned, being an old-time county commissioner and understanding the problem that counties are going through. And it's difficult for me to then deny the counties any assistance at all from the state that they have become accustomed to, as many of the schools in other cities and other stuff, other agencies, have. At the same time, I understand our fiscal problem and I recognize that somehow we're trying to treat agencies across the state somewhat equal. I don't think I can vote for this. I'm not going to make a big issue out of it because I understand that, I think, Senator Raikes has the votes to proceed with this. I just have to tell you that I do have some concern, particularly for the small counties that are struggling, that are at the levy limit, are trying to take care