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LB 379

worked so many years, those of us that have been here in the last five years or so, in trying to reduce that reliance on property tax, and now you're slowly putting it back. And that's one of my concerns. So I will be supporting the bill and hope that you will also. Thank you.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you, Senator Stuhr. Senator Baker, you are the next speaker.

SENATOR BAKER: Thank you, Madam President and members of the body. I rise in opposition to this bill. I did not vote for it coming out of committee. Think we're headed the wrong direction here. Question I'd like to pose to the people who quote the polls saying would you rather have a income tax or a sales tax increase, I have a question I'd like to pose to them. Do you want a tax increase? Was that in that poll too? My constituents, the taxpayers, are still winning here on the e-mail. I haven't checked phone calls lately, but I have two, since I spoke last, no more from the education establishment, but one of them...they're both interesting: Thank you for your no vote regarding LB 379 coming out of committee. I simply do not understand why anyone would want to increase taxes to 1996 levels again. Good point. We're not going back to 1996 except for tax levels. How was the stock market in '96? What were your real estate taxes in '96? People had income to pay taxes on in 1996. We weren't in the straits we are now. And to say, well, we're just going back to 1996, the only thing we're going back to 1996 on is the tax rates, period. What was the state funding of K-12 schools in 1996? It was 20 percent. What is it now? Forty-two, 44 percent, somewhere in there. We've over...we've increased it by two, doubled it. I'd yield some time to anybody who wants to raise their hand and say, yes, my real estate tax has gone down every year since 1997. Anybody in that situation? I don't see any takers. Mine hasn't. I don't think anybody else's has either. What have we done? We've continued to increase state aid to schools with valuation increases. Even with a dollar levy limit, our taxes, our real estate tax has gone up. So I don't hold much...there's not much strength to me in the numbers of people say, well, they'd prefer a sales tax or income tax or whatever. What's the main question? Would you prefer tax or not? My people are saying,