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LB 540

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Bourne, you're recognized to open on your amendment, AM1616.

SENATOR BOURNE: Thank you, Mr. President, members. What I have here to offer you is actually a pretty straightforward amendment. I thought it probably would make some sense if I just read it to you. It says any reductions in a school district budget, made to comply with the budget limitation in TEEOSA, shall affect classroom expenses as a last resort. For purposes of this section, and it goes on to define what classroom expenses are. Those include programs and courses offered as part of the school curriculum, and the cost of teaching and administrative certificated employees needed to offer such programs. Classroom expenses does not include technology, equipment, supplies, maintenance, the cost of noncertificated employees, transportation, extracurricular programs and activities, capital expenditures, and national travel. The reason behind this is, since we're making cuts to education and, depending on where LB 540 goes, the cuts could be significant or actually I think you could argue that any cut to K-12 education is significant and I think that we've demonstrated here in this body a priority to our kids and education, and a number of us have stood up and said how important that is; that that's the future of our state. I wanted to remind you of a constitutional provision found in Article VII, Section 1. It says, "The Legislature shall provide for the free instruction in the common schools of this state all persons between the ages of five and twenty-one years of age." Free instruction, that's what they're talking about. The constitution itself says that instruction of our kids is a priority. I'm simply adding an amendment to this bill that says if there is any cuts to K-12 education it should be done furthest away from the child as possible, very simple. I offer it for your consideration. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Bourne. You've heard the opening on AM1616 to LB 540. Open for discussion on that amendment. Senator Raikes, followed by Senator Synowiecki, Preister, and Foley, and Smith. Senator Synowiecki.