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deal with the situation they find themselves. So again, I strongly oppose this amendment. I urge you to do so as well. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Raikes. Senator Preister.

SENATOR PREISTER: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise in strong support of the amendment. I do so because I think education is one of the founding principles of this country. A free and available public education is one of the reasons that people came to this country. There were not those opportunities in other places, in other times. And as a core part of our country, I think it's important that we focus on the real essence of what that public education is, and that's the students and the teacher and the classroom and those core curricular programs that are important to that public education. This amendment that Senator Bourne has proposed to us gives that priority to the classroom and to that instruction. Some of the extracurricular things are certainly valuable. Some of the arts are certainly valuable and, as somebody who has a business in that area, I know those values. But are they more important when we put priorities before us than what takes place in the classroom and the actual experience that the student has in the classroom? I think not. I think Senator Bourne has hit a real important issue and one that is frequently used when budgets are cut to elicit either support or opposition. When budgets are cut when money is tight, whether it's a school, a university or any other group, an agency, as soon as they roll out what they're going to do in enacting those budget cuts, they usually do things that are the most difficult to do and that are going to raise the most opposition and that are going to get people the most upset. And so they either create larger classrooms, in this case, to a point where students don't get the kind of attention that they really need in those classrooms, or any other number of scenarios to get the attention of the parents or of other people to not do the cuts, to not reduce the spending, to not cut those funds for those programs. I think this says that it takes one component off the table. It says that the instruction and the classroom work has top priority and that can't even be played with in a political kind of way to generate opposition to those cuts. It says we, as a legislative body,