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LB 540

as far as a philosophical point of view on where to vote on this bill, where do we stand philosophically, and I have to agree with the philosophical basis and that is the statement that we make that cuts in education need to be made as far away from the classroom as possible. I too have had concerns shared with me verbatim to what Senator Stuhr has shared--it will tie our hands. I guess, Senator Bourne, would you submit to a question?

SPEAKER BROMM: Senator Bourne, would you yield, please?

SENATOR BOURNE: Absolutely.

SENATOR COMBS: Could you...as far as responding to that question, can I pass that question on to you from my constituents in how will their hands be tied by this bill...by this amendment?

SENATOR BOURNE: I think that's a fair question, Senator Combs, and I'd answer it in two ways. Number one, I'm not sure their hands would be tied. And in the second place, quite frankly, if it benefits the children in a classroom I don't care if their hands are tied. And I'm not being flippant. I'm trying to be honest with you. If this hurts the administrators' feelings or if they're upset by this, it doesn't matter to me because I think that, you know, the kids are a priority, the students are a priority, and that's all I can say and that's my intent here, is that, again, that we recognize that priority, that the kids or our students are the future of this state. And if there's some hard feelings on behalf of the administrators that because of this amendment, well, you know, I think that's too bad. I think the kids are more important than that.

SENATOR COMBS: Thank you. I would like to also say that I do agree with Senator Price. I do believe our school boards do a very good job in balancing the cuts that they have to make. I think they do look to our children first. However, if we do have the opportunity, as a Legislature, to make a statement as to where our priorities lie, I think if we did have the parents and teachers sitting with us here in the body this evening that they would also agree that the kids' needs should be put first. So I thank you for the opportunity to speak, and I would give