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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 540

really a low amount of total funds. So I think that the 0 percent, though it is arbitrary, that it holds down, we're willing to accept it because it is temporary. And because of that, I am in support of LB 540 but I'm in support because of that fact, that it is temporary. And I would yield the rest of my time to Senator Bourne if he would like it.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Bourne.

SENATOR BOURNE: Thank you. Thank you, Senator Connealy, Mr. President and members. I was over here visiting with some other members and the very able legal counsel from the Education Committee came over and pointed out on my chart where I have the solid number along the bottom there, and it shows that it's flat. She said that, in reality, it would increase slightly because of a cost/growth factor. And I didn't mean to imply that it wouldn't increase at all. As Senator Raikes mentioned earlier in the debate and I agreed with him, that there will be some increases there. But what I'm suggesting, and again, this is very, very confusing and if you don't understand it, don't feel left out because it is difficult material. And I won't even profess that I understand it. And I'm not sure, no offense, Senator Raikes, that he understands it entirely. That's...I think that's just a reality. What I'm suggesting to you is that a number of years ago when we put in the state aid formula, we said that needs would grow at 2.5 percent. And all my amendment does is say that we're going to track what that 2.5 percent would be. And if you look at my chart, the dotted line that's on an angle going upright, is the tracking number, and the lower line that's fairly flat along the bottom is what the needs portion of the formula would be from the year 2002 to 2005. And so, all I'm saying is that the number that we committed to a number of years ago is the dotted line number. LB 540, as amended, would change that so that it's fairly flat. There is no requirement that we fund this in the year 2005. It simply reflects what our commitment was a number of years ago when we put in the state aid formula. It could be in 2005, God forbid, that we have a similar budget situation that we do now or even worse. And obviously if that's the case, there's nothing that would prevent us from funding schools at a lesser level. There is nothing in my amendment that increases our