

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

May 13, 2003

LB 407

Appropriations Committee, and I think that I've made it pretty clear, did a really...did a sound job and they did some good solid work, I just didn't think the cuts were deep enough. My no vote on LB 407 laid out that story. I didn't need anybody writing that story for me. I think everybody understood that. As far as the tax increases were concerned, like I laid out last week, I thought they were...I think that tax increases are bad economic policy. My no votes on those tax increases tell that story. What I wanted to do was visit the cuts a little bit, some of the ones that Senator Erdman proposed, some of the ones that Appropriations Committee proposed, and the Governor. We've talked about the negative impacts of a lot of these cuts. Wouldn't...couldn't we deal with this for just a second? Wouldn't some, or I should say a portion, of these cuts, force local type of consolidation when you transfer the pain, if you will, over to the local governments? Wouldn't that transfer and translate into more efficiency in those areas? Quick example would be this. If I had, to me, and this is the way I look at it, if I had to cut 10 people from a 45-person business, the other 35 people are forced to pick up the various duties that those other 10 people performed. Now, if those duties can't be fulfilled with the remaining people on your staff, then the remaining people on the staff have to focus on core functionalities and the business has to move its resources toward those objectives. Now what has happened is one of two things: that business either fails, or it becomes more efficient. That business is looking to survive. I would submit that in a lot of ways that's what government will do at a local level. In short, I think deeper cuts to government agencies don't always necessarily have to be a negative thing. Do I need to...break it down to a micro standpoint, do I need the streets out in front of my house plowed? No, I can get out of the driveway. I mean we're doing things at the local level that are quite wasteful. Let's analyze some of that. If we transfer that, wouldn't it...couldn't it breed a little more efficiency? I would say...I would submit that if we can't make those deeper cuts now, if we can't do that now, maybe we can't, but if we can't do it now and if we can't change our mind-set about the business as usual mentality, if we can't aggressively fight things like unfunded federal mandates, we're a sovereign group, we can fight these type of things.