

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

May 13, 2003

LB 407

SENATOR REDFIELD: Thank you, Mr. President. Members of the body, we've been talking about government's budget and certainly as we look down the list we can make a case for just how important each and every one of these elements is. And when we go home to our districts and we talk to the people that are there and we look at the circumstances that exist in their lives, I think again we can understand just how important those elements are. I have a plant in my district that has seen severe cutbacks. They're fighting for survival. Thirty-five hundred people out of work, yet, they will still have to pay their property taxes or lose their homes. They will still have to pay sales tax or not buy anything, and when their children outgrow their shoes or their bluejeans, well, somehow or other they have to scrape up the money. And if they're lucky enough to have one spouse who still has a job, they're looking at increases in the rates on the income tax on that one remaining job. The farm economy is looking at drought, and the farmers are saying, I don't have enough money to keep going and yet somehow I'm being asked to pay a greater tax burden on what's left. I look at the bottom line on this amendment and I see that, in comparison to last year's budget which we're just in the final months of, 2002-03, that there actually is a very minimal increase in the first year of \$11 million, but in the following year there's a \$104 million increase. And I know that there are many citizens in this state that would be grateful if they just weren't running in negative numbers; if they could even hold even and freeze the money that they had a year ago; the families that have been very responsible and saved money for their children to go to school and seen their investments dry up over the last three years, 25, 30 percent losses, maybe 50 percent losses, so sorry, you can only go to school for 2 years instead of 4. So what's the compromise that's here? Well, we may not like all of the elements, but it's a lot closer to the Appropriations' proposal than it is to the Governor's proposal. It's \$177 million more than the Governor had proposed. And I'm sure that the Governor and his people went over the budget with a fine-tooth comb and they had a rationale for every decision that they made, just as the Appropriations Committee had a rationale for theirs, just as the Revenue Committee has a rationale for the committee amendments in the bills that we bring to the floor and see sometimes change drastically by