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LB 407, 540

SENATOR CUDABACK: Time. Thank you, Senator Wehrbein. Senator Beutler, followed by Senator Vrtiska and eight others.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature, I want to support this amendment. I want to try to explain it a little more to you. Let me tell you, it breaks my heart. I think we have a great university that was on track to getting much better. We have a strong K-12 system. I hate to do this, and this is the last thing I'm going to do. And I have a lot of demons I want to get out this morning too, and I'll try to do that in later remarks, but I want to focus on what this amendment does for a moment to try to give you the perspective of people who worked a little bit on the amendment. First of all, it cuts aid to the university, the state colleges, and the community colleges by a total of \$13 million, and as you can see by the handout that went around it simply cut them proportionately so that whatever the size of their budget was compared to one another, we cut them. We gave them a proportionate share of the \$13 million cut. That's kind of the way we've handled things, generally speaking, in Appropriations with regard to, in particular, the university and the state colleges. Then it goes on to cut state aid \$10 million a year for the two years. Now this is very important. It will be necessary to amend LB 540 on Final Reading to bring it back and to increase the levy limit from \$1.04 to I think \$1.05. We need to do that, and that's part of this commitment. And if you vote for this amendment I consider you committed to voting to increase the levy limit in LB 540. Those two things go together. So the total package is \$33 million in cuts. If you subtract this \$33 million from where we are now, the amount of revenue we would then need to raise is about \$315 million, so it will have been reduced from \$355 million, our starting point, down to \$315 million to be raised. In Senator Brashear's bill right now, it's at \$342 million of revenue, so this would allow us to take car repairs out of Senator Brashear's bill and then Senator Brashear's bill would be roughly equivalent and would match the revenue needed to fill the gap in LB 407 with this amendment. So the two things would be properly sized and I would hope that that would be basically our solution to the problem and that we would be over the hump with this amendment. So those I think are the things I wanted to get across and I