

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

March 30, 2004 LB 1089

amendment. Even though I appreciate absolutely the Redfield-Bourne approach to doing something, it's just that I don't think that the Redfield-Bourne amendment helps in the short run, doesn't help very much in the short run, and it doesn't help at all in the long term. And it's the long term that we have to get a handle on. And I sat out the discussion on General File on raising the levy limit to \$1.10...I had a bill to do that in 1998...because just looking not at the merits of the amounts but at the trends, it was unsustainable, and unless we get some control of some of the trends, you know, we can...we can pick around the edges on the \$300,000 and it's never going to help. And there were some statements made on General File on the budget bill that I just...I couldn't even believe that we were saying, well, we'll just keep our heads in the sand for a couple more years. I would direct you to look at the pie charts that go back 20 years and what percentage of the total state budget pie was made up of various things, and I would particularly urge you to look at the yellow numbers because that's where our growth is. The growth is in Medicaid. And when you're having double-digit growth, it...as it becomes a bigger part of the pie, it becomes a bigger part of the problem. We are also having very great growth in the state aid part of the pie. Now, that is somewhat offset by a leveling out or a reduction in property taxes, but look at the university, because it is a big part of the pie of the amendment that is before us. The university, as a share of the state budget, has gone from 23 percent 20 years ago, to 19 percent...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR BROWN: ...10 years ago, to 16 percent. And so we are trying to deal with long-term trend problems by not addressing the major issues. We've had some proposals before us to change either the eligibility or the services covered by Medicaid to be able to get a handle on those costs. We haven't been able to do some of those things. We've had a big shift in state aid to education, and a lot of these things are just not sustainable. And whether or not we take \$4 million out here or add \$300,000 in, in another place, until we can address some of these trends we're not going to be able...we're not going to leave the state, at least some of those of us who are term limited are not going