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

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an endangered species. I'm an actual in-the-middle, on-the-fence, uncommitted vote. I am subject to the persuasion of both sides. And I want you to know, neither side has wone it so far. Let me tell you what my problem is here, and that is that the...both sides of the argument seems to have...have not addressed the things that are going to be critical to deciding my vote. It's a terribly complex area, and maybe one bill and one approach will not get enough value on the side to justify it. But if the idea is that you can...we should have choice as the principle concept here, like Senator Hudkins just says, then I will tell you that choice that is used in the furtherance of de facto segregation is not appropriate. And for the opponents of this bill to simply say, you know, gosh, it's a shame to have the race card raised, is a way of not facing up to that issue, which I need to have faced up to. And it isn't in the discussion so far. So, choice so that I can segregate? acceptable to me. Choice so that I can have low-quality school but low-cost school? Not an acceptable choice to me. choice because I have a high-quality school? That starts to make sense to me. Choice because this makes sense with the quality of life and the distance and transportation to other schools? That makes sense to me. But not every choice is right, because some are too self-interested, and that they are the cost of the child's well-being, rather than the tax paying of the parent. And I haven't found a way to separate these so that the choices that I'm endorsing are legitimate choices rather than the illegitimate choices which are also possible. Here's what I think, as a general set of ideas. Number one, there are Class I's that have to stay open, they need to stay open, it's good for kids that they stay open, it's good for families that they stay open, and the law should demand that a school board keep them open. They're distant and remote. They have to be protected. There's no other way for the quality of life but to do that. We should. Secondly, that the quality that we are all arguing about is a very mixed bag. There are some terrific Class I's, and there are thoroughly second-rate ones as well. If we're talking about a high-quality Class I, and people are supporting that, I've got to... I certainly don't want to endanger that to exist. But if the quality is of a medium amount, and the whole purpose is because you're shielding rural land on the edge of a city from taxation as part of that