

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

February 25, 2005 LB 503

going to chime in, I think, with Senator Landis. My role is, I think, somewhat different. He mentioned his traditional role representing the Revenue Committee; mine, the Education Committee. And I would tell you that very...I feel that I very much support the financial requirements of school systems in the state, and I do appreciate Senator Bourne bringing this proposal because it's something that's of interest to, I think, the entire body, from both the aspects of revenue and education. I will also tell you up-front that I don't support the proposal. One thing, and Senator Landis has mentioned, once you start down this route, where is the logical place to stop? Retirement benefits for two years, well, maybe longer than two years. And actually once you start making exceptions to the budget lid, as soon as you do it, it goes on, and on, and on, so there's no sort of withdrawing from that. But he mentioned healthcare costs, which are critically important, and certainly they've gone up a lot. If you're going to do retirement, then it certainly makes sense to do healthcare and maybe some other things. You could also argue, I think, that if this were a huge impact on the financial well-being of schools, this may be more nearly justified. There's \$15 million, but my understanding is half of it is going to be borne by the employees themselves, so only about half of it would be the obligation of the school system. And \$7 million, if \$7.5 million is not an insignificant amount of money, on the other hand, the total expenditures in our K-12 schools in the state are up a little over \$2 billion. So this is not a major percentage increase. When you put that in combination with the other things that you could logically include once you do this, I think it raises the broader issue. If you're going to do something like this, then you need to consider totally redoing the budget lids, the levy lids that we now have in place. Maybe we should do that, but I don't think this is the time to do it. So I think the appropriate action at this point is simply say no to this proposal, even though I, again I will tell you, I appreciate Senator Bourne raising the issue because it's one that needs to be brought up. But I think the correct answer at this point is no. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Raikes. Senator Synowiecki, on the Bourne amendment to LB 503.