

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

April 6, 2005

LB 689A

local school systems will go on to the property tax. The other place is special ed. The Governor did not include special ed. We have included it. We could back up on that. But be very clear about what we're doing. If we do that, it will increase TEEOSA. Two years down the road it will come back to bite us. But the greater problem is that the local school districts are required by federal law to pay that special ed bill, and we in the Legislature have said they can go over the levy cap in order to pay for special ed. It is a very simple, direct picture. If we take it...if we do not do special ed for any reason, it will be a bill shifted over to property tax. I feel strongly that's the wrong thing to do in our state situation and I know others join me within it. But be very clear about that. We do not have \$8 million. We struggle over \$100,000 in the budget. What would we do? We would have to shift it in some way because it has to be in the budget in order to be reserved or whatever term you want to put to it, and in effect we have spent it, even though we can come back to it. I, with others, strongly support distance learning, but this is...the bill in its present way is not the way to go at it. I support the amendment. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Kruse. Further discussion? Senator Mines, followed by Senator Chambers.

SENATOR MINES: Thank you, Mr. President, colleagues. I, too, support the amendment and I support distance learning and I support the rural environment that uses this heavily, and I think we as a state ought to engage and provide all that we can, both fiscally and administratively. I don't believe that it's prudent that we include, whether you call it allocate, appropriate, or earmark, \$8 million for a project that we don't know what...how much it's going to cost. Senator Stuhr said maybe...said \$8 million may or may not be the right amount. Well, let's make it \$100 million. We don't have the money. And Senator Kruse obviously said exactly what's going to happen. We're going to shift the burden of paying for this system down the road to property tax, and I'm not in favor of that either. The reason that we study issues, the reason that this group would be formed to study and evaluate what hardware and software, and hopefully curriculum would be included, is to determine how much that's going to cost. And I think putting