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FLOOR DEBATE

April 6, 2005 LB 689A

further lights on. Senator Beutler, is Senator
Beutler...Senator Beutler, the Chair recognize you to close on
FA146.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature, I'm sure for all of us we would like to set money aside that we know will absolutely be there for the required purpose in the future, but it's certainly not our common practice to do that, especially with such a large amount of money. The fact of the matter is that the money is not legally protected. That is, although the likelihood of this happening is not high, if we gave the money to the Department of Education, if they came back in the plan and we didn't like the plan, they could spend the money anyway on the plan. And so why would we want to trust an agency more than we trust ourselves? I mean, we have all stood up and we've all talked about distance education and we've all expressed support for it. If the money is there next year, and the odds are that it will be, the revenue continues to come in above predictions, then the money will be there to be spent. If, on the other hand, we should be surprised and the money should and the revenue should deteriorate, well, then I think we're in a better position to reassess where we are, both with regard to this item and with regard to many other things that will be before us in the future, and to compare them to one another in a fiscally tight situation. Hopefully, that will not be the situation, but it's prudent for us, I think, to anticipate all possibilities. I would note for you that one thing you have not heard today is the argument that all of these contracts are coming up for letting and, therefore, we need to expedite this whole business because of these contracts that are coming...that are being terminated or coming to the end of their term. And I take it, from the absence of that argument today, that we've...I think we pretty much understand that that's not an impediment to holding the money and waiting to see how the plan evolves. So let's not trap ourselves. Let's act in the most fiscally prudent way because we have the opportunity to wait and to delay and to act at the appropriate time on this. So again, I would recommend to you that we drop out of this bill the \$8 million that is currently there in aid of carrying out its provisions. Thank you.