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FLOOR DEBATE

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\$161 million approximately, then it is the obligation of the state, according to statute, to provide at least \$161 million for the next two years. Now the upper range is 5 percent, so it could be a 5 percent on top of that base. The Governor chose 0 percent.

SENATOR KRUSE: Yeah.

SENATOR RAIKES: The Appropriations Committee chose 3 percent. I'm recommending, given our current situation, 5 percent. So all of those are within the law, so to speak.

SENATOR KRUSE: I would just...thank you. I would simply recognize that the competition with it, as already been pointed out, is the economic incentive package...

SENATOR CUDABACK: Time, Senator Kruse.

SENATOR KRUSE: ...that we are considering and will continue to consider. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Kruse. Senator Flood, followed by Senator Loudon.

SENATOR FLOOD: Thank you, Mr. President, members. I agree with what Senator Janssen said. And he pointed out an issue that we find in the rural areas all the time, and that is constituents asking us about property taxes. As straightforward as this is, this not only addresses additional property tax on residents of a particular district, it also takes care of a need that will be addressed two years down the road in the budget anyway. We're essentially moving it from one pot to another. There is something happening across the state with special education, and I see it in rural Nebraska and in the bigger populated cities. Norfolk, for example, has become a hub of special education because we are the biggest school in northeast Nebraska. We see kids and their families moving from rural communities to Norfolk to receive services in autism, in special education of every kind. We have over 55 special education instructors in the Norfolk Public Schools. That is a big program. In the last four years, Norfolk special education programs have increased