

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

May 5, 2005

LB 425

SENATOR THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. I did carry the bill. Some of you were here in the Legislature and some of you weren't, but these were the dark days when we had to find ways to cut the budget. In fact, some of these things that we did cut I've been advocating for years, and I'm kind of viewed by certain people and have been tarred with a certain brush of being some kind of big wild-eyed spender. I was willing to stand up, introduce the bills, and cut state spending. On this particular bill, the bill was introduced, the Appropriations Committee supported it, it went to the floor. That day, some people got together, I wasn't one of them, and had some kind of verbal chitchat about it. When it got to the floor, instead of repealing it totally till 2009, it just got repealed for two years. We all--that's the deal. The deal that we're talking about here though is...or that's what happened. That wasn't a deal, that was a vote on the floor of the Legislature. And not...but the Appropriations Committee always has the ability to establish these aid programs, what we can afford. Now everybody wanted to be restored, and we knew they were going to come back in hordes the minute the revenue forecast started looking a little better, and they've been there this year. And we like to be loved, we like to have people think we care about them. We've had...we're going to have...we could have a thousand amendments come up, because we all want to do the right thing for everyone. We want to do the right thing for the cities and the counties and state aid to schools and the university and the Department of Environmental Quality and problems we have with water issues and law suits and settling those. And the Appropriations Committee takes all this as a big picture and puts it together for all of you. Now you can have legitimate differences with us, but the fact is the Appropriations Committee has the authority to set the aid program. Now whatever wheeling and dealing went on that I wasn't party to, all you really have, in fact, is that at that point in time MIRF was suspended for two years. MIRF is back in the budget. But the cities want their aid restored. Well, all the state agencies would like to have their programs restored. The people who didn't get any salary increases would like their salary increases restored. We heard this morning the DD people want to get their salaries back up, want to be restored to