

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

May 5, 2005

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more. So it's not really right and I know we don't have a lot of money, but, again, we are statutorily obligated, to the best of my understanding. Senator Chambers, is that correct?

SENATOR CHAMBERS: I didn't...

SENATOR COMBS: May I direct a question to Senator Chambers?

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Senator Chambers, would you respond?

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Happily.

SENATOR COMBS: All right. Are we statutorily obligated to pay this money?

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Well, there's a statutory provision that says the state will.

SENATOR COMBS: Okay. Thank you.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: You're welcome.

SENATOR COMBS: Well, if we promise to do something, I guess we probably ought to, at least that's the way I was raised. Thank you.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you, Senator Combs. Senator Don Pederson, to speak.

SENATOR D. PEDERSON: Thank you, Madam President. You know, it's a very compelling thing to talk about the fact property tax relief, helping the counties, and so forth. Those are the same arguments that I used several years ago when this first went into effect. But when I first started practicing law, I had a very elderly attorney that was very well respected. And he said, you know, as a last resort, why don't you look at the statute? And so let's look at the statute, which is 47-119.01. And this statute that we're saying is a definite you've got to do this or that, let's hear it. Beginning with the fiscal year 2003-04 and each fiscal year thereafter, the total annual appropriation approved by the Legislature for the department for