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LB 425

SENATOR ERDMAN: Thank you, Mr. President. Members of the Legislature, welcome to "Prime Time Live" at the Legislature. The amendment before you, I believe, is one of the things that we have set as public policy this afternoon, and that is if you can find a state statute that's not funded, bring it to our attention and we will fund it. That's what Senator Stuthman did this afternoon so eloquently, even though you can argue what the law actually says. The amendment before you restores the distributions under the program of the county property tax relief for...starting in fiscal years '05-06, as is outlined in current state law in Section 77-3618. We've had discussions on this section indirectly. Senator Don Pederson pointed out, I believe, on General File that there was a big goose egg under this program, even though the state statute required the distributions to be resumed in this year. The amendment before you is drafted exactly off of the language that's in page 42 of the Appropriations Committee's book, which states that the money will be at a reduced level, and part of that is due to the fact that, if you look at the current language in 77-3618, it requires county to be at a certain levy limit in order to receive this state aid. So that information is used to determine the amount of money that's in the budget. So on page 42 you can read that there is a recommended amount of \$2.9 million for fiscal year '06, and \$3.1 million for '07. The Governor's budget did not include this money. The Appropriations Committee's budget did not include this money. But I figured that since we've kicked open the doors of the treasury and we've found areas of the state law that are not being funded, that this is an opportunity. The program that was designed is generally designed to help some of those counties that probably truly need the most help in the area of reducing some of their costs. So the amendment before you is a sincere attempt. I sincerely believe that this is something that the Legislature should consider and I would encourage your discussion and hopefully your adoption of the amendment to this budget. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Erdman. Open for discussion on the Erdman amendment. Senator Stuthman.