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believe, across the state, we are passing another mandate here. We're saying that school districts have to implement this. It has to be done. That's a mandate, folks. And to ask taxpayers to assume that, we can't do it. You know, we're thinking, okay, okay, we've got the money in the fund, the money is going to cover it. You know, I'm kind of conservative. I think you guys know that. I want to...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR FISCHER: ...make sure the money is in the fund, and I want to make sure that we can implement this program and fully support it, the distance learning program, and not have it another mandate on our taxpayers. For those reasons, I oppose the amendment, AM2721, and I hope you will consider that and agree with me. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Fischer. On with discussion of the Smith amendment to the Raikes amendment. Senator Louden.

SENATOR LOUDEN: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. As I understand this amendment, this is a loan forgiveness, or a scholarship, however you want to look at it. And I have no problem with that if we want to set up a scholarship fund or loan forgiveness for teachers that want to teach in certain areas or want to pursue certain subject matter. The problem I have is that it's kind of a wide-open blank check deal. There's...there isn't any stop on the top of it. And when we're doing it, why, we're going into this distance learning, which is probably something that's going to have to help our schools in the future. Since we've implemented some of these reorganization efforts in the last year or so, there's going to have to be more distance learning done in your rural areas and areas where long distances between schools. So I think that the whole amendment, as far as I'm concerned, should probably be turned around, that there would be a certain amount set aside for your Attracting Excellence year, perhaps it's \$250,000, or whatever it is, set that as a maximum, and then what was left would go into your distance learning and some of your other things that would help your school districts work