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FLOOR DEBATE

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the financial aspect of this concern. I've talked to Senator...to our Speaker Brashear and shared these concerns with him, and in fact did have an amendment ready to submit. And I'm going to just give you the highlights of this: that any mechanism for funding this program or any mechanism that would be made available for, let's say, decision making on this program and have availability to funds--and keep in mind these are public dollars--would be subject to an annual audit by the Auditor of Public Accounts, and the costs of such audit shall be paid by the endowment provider. A copy of such audit shall be filed with the Auditor of Public Accounts and made available to any member of the Legislature upon request. In addition, this amendment states, no funds in the Early Childhood Education Cash Fund shall be used to pay the administrative costs of the Early Childhood Education Endowment Board of Trustees created in Section 6 of this act, or any endowment provider selected pursuant to Section 4 of this act. And I have discussed this with our Speaker Brashear. He has assured me that he would work with me to address these concerns. And I'd like to offer him the remainder of my time, if he would like to respond to this, (laugh) which he now tells me, thank you, but no. (Laugh) Thank you. I return the balance of my time.

SENATOR BAKER: Thank you. Senator Engel, you're recognized.

SENATOR ENGEL: Mr. President, members of the body, I, too, commend Senator Brashear and others for their insight. I've been told by many professionals that if you can get a child between age zero and three, four, five years old that you can fairly well predict, if you can spend the time, the necessary time with them, you can fairly predict the outcome of what they're going to be as they attain adulthood. So many of these children, they just don't have a chance. They just don't have a chance. They're behind in their learning curve. And when they get to school, they have a terrible time and, as a result, their thoughts are everywhere except where they should be and, as a result, they wind up in a life of crime, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. So I do commend them for this and I think it's a very worthwhile project. As far as using the lands and funds monies, I think we...a few years ago we did pass some legislation where they would rid the...sell off the lands and