

March 5, 1974

SENATOR DE CAMP: Senator Lewis, a little earlier we established quite clearly that there were no provisions in the bill that would guarantee a reduction in property, if your amendment is adopted. Now, you did suggest, however, that the existing economic conditions, the concern of the people, and all these other various factors, would cause this reduction of itself. It would kinda flow like out of the heavens or wherever. Do we have experience to look back on and see that this actually occurred when we had our previous state aid program or do we have experience the other way to show that the state aid that was given just went into the big pot and school costs continued to increase, that there was no property tax reduction at all?

SENATOR FRANK LEWIS: First of all, I'd respond that last year there was property tax reduction and obviously was a limit. But the cost of school financing like everything else is not out of disproportion and I'd advise you, if you want to go back to 1967, to the present and compare state government expenditures with school (local) district expenditures, you might be a little red-faced when you took that issue home. Simply because of the massive expenditures at this level. Obviously in a time of extremely volatile inflation, you're not going to be able to do anything except to keep up with the cost and anybody that tells you that by passing a magic limit, you're going to solve the problems. For instance, I suppose in your districts they do a lot of transportation of students. Now gas is up twice as high and if you really want to do that, we can cut out transportation as a non-educational function. That's the way to solve....to lower some of the cost of education.

SENATOR DE CAMP: Well, then as I understand it, your answer is that there was property tax reduction last year in conjunction with the limit we imposed but there wasn't previous to that when we had no limit, is that correct?

SENATOR FRANK LEWIS: Well, there's two things that you didn't listen to again, Senator DeCamp, and I'm certainly not chastising you for it. However, I mentioned to you that when we made the decision on the limit last year, that was in June, the settlements from the teachers were pretty well in, in fact they almost....I'd say 95% were in, many school districts had somewhat of a cash reserve either through a number of systems and much of that was used up as a one-time shot. Obviously that's why I put a one-time limit on it.

SENATOR DE CAMP: One final question. Then, if you believed that imposing the limit would kill the bill, by that I mean would not have enough votes to override the veto, would you still insist on imposing the limit?

SENATOR FRANK LEWIS: Yes.

SENATOR DE CAMP: You would rather not have state aid? Than any controls, is that correct?

SENATOR FRANK LEWIS: Well, Senator DeCamp, you see sometimes that's not exactly the choices you have to take. Obviously I'll continue to fight for fair and free method of distribution of aid and for the \$20 million without the limit. But I don't like those people that try to give you that as the only alternative. Now, if you can assure me that's how it is and give me a number of people that feel that way and you feel you've got a nose count and those kind of things, then we can start discussing this in less than the abstract and more in the practical.