

in this body who supports LB 138 will certainly want to support this proposed amendment so that every constituent in our areas, the various forty-nine legislative districts will know we are doing something in the Legislature to give property tax relief. Property tax relief is the thing my constituents are talking about. I venture that is one of the top items in each of your districts. This is your opportunity to say to your own constituents, I believe property tax is carrying more than its share of the taxes. We are not reducing taxes. We all know that but we are making a shift. LB 138 will make a shift in taxes and this is a direct method to give your constituents and mine property tax relief. I support the amendment.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Johnson, do you wish to speak on the Lewis amendment?

SENATOR JOHNSON: Yes. Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I oppose Senator Lewis' amendment. I believe his amendment is, of course, an enchanting one. It directly answers Senator Murphy's concerns that once we begin to chip away at county responsibility for the Medicaid payouts that the kind of relief we provided the counties would not be transferred back to the individual property taxpayer because county government would go ahead and spend that money any way it sees fit but as you and I well know, there are a number of programs that county governments have deferred for year in and year out as they picked up the rising Medicaid costs. They have had to pick up the rising Medicaid cost because those costs have been mandated by state statute. They had no recourse but to defer those programs. Far be it from us to tie their hands by the Lewis amendment and in effect, continue the deferral of needed programs. We have to repose our trust in locally elected officials just as the voters repose their trust in us and when the locally elected officials do receive this kind of windfall coming from the passage of LB 138, they should be allowed in their own wisdom to determine how to use that windfall. If it means that they will reduce their mill levies, so be it. That is their choice. They were elected people just like we are. If they decide to use some of that windfall to begin to meet deferred maintenance needs, that is their choice, so be it. In the end they ultimately are as accountable to the voters as we are. The Revenue Committee spent a considerable amount of time earlier this year dealing with lids and dealing with these kinds of adjustment factors and lid budgets and we concluded that they were essentially unworkable. They created an enormous budgetary