

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator DeCamp.

SENATOR DECAMP: Mr. President, this is an amendment I mentioned when the bill first came up. It is an amendment I have talked to you individually about. It is now being passed out despite the fact it is also in the Journal. I have suggested if indeed it is a matter of tax equity rather than reorganization, then there is a simple solution. It is a fair solution and it resolves a problem you're going to have to face up to and that is the free high tuition problem. Additionally, I believe it sets a precedent for maybe the standards of legislating in the future we will have to do as we change the financing of school system. What the amendment does is as follows. For purposes only of high school, in other words the final four years, it creates a single school district or single taxing district I think is even a more proper word for all Class I property in the entire state. I want to emphasize it does not disturb any existing school districts. It does not disturb any existing school boards. It does not affect or disturb any existing financing system for the primary grades. It deals only with the high school which in most Class I's is now financed by something called free high tuition which is in the courts and is in a state of confusion because of probable unconstitutionality. All property in this district would be valued just as you would any other property, but the big difference is the following two things: Number one, it would have a uniform mill levy, a uniform taxation rate. The rate I propose is three-quarters of 1 percent. That uniform rate, so far as I can determine based on existing values, would raise probably about \$30 million. The current amount being paid, as I understand it from the records, is about \$25 million. So this would be a significant increase in taxes or money raised from Class I's for purposes of financing high school education. How would the money be distributed? Very simply, it would be distributed on a per capita basis so if \$30 million is raised and if there were 1,000 students across the state going to different schools, then the amount for each student that would be paid to whatever school they happened to be attended would be uniform and it would be what, \$3,000. I repeat, this resolves the free high tuition issue. It establishes a uniform method of taxing the Class I's so they would know where they are. It does not disturb their existing school districts, school boards or any of those things or any