

and reorganize, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. Well you have heard Senator DeCamp over the years and you know there has always been a member in our body who is given to hyperbole which means exaggeration. Sometimes means gross exaggeration. Now the truth in fact is that severability, on severability, as Senator Landis pointed out, when this Legislature made it clear that affiliation was to be a recognized reorganization procedure and when we know that affiliation totally and absolutely preserves the local school in the Class I district, which it absolutely does, when that happens then in effect there are now two paths to be followed. One is there can be a merger path and in the merger path we have done everything we can to preserve the local vote. And the other path is there can be an affiliation path where the local vote is totally preserved. There is no constitutional question about the preserving of that local vote. So we simply say that if the merger path is adopted then at least in terms of whether or not this local vote is a constitutional question, and Senator Lamb has raised the constitutional question issue, we ought not to let the whole bill hang in jeopardy on that constitutional question. So we put severability in on that and on that alone, nothing else, that alone. And secondly in terms of tax equity, in my view affiliation does jar the tax equity issue some, genuinely does. I have never been a supporter of affiliation, never have been. On the other hand rural people believe that affiliation is a necessary product for them to have to be able to totally protect and preserve their integrity and so I again am willing, if affiliation is handled carefully, thoughtfully, to allow that to occur. That does, however, disturb tax equity, but by no means does it set it totally asunder, by no means does it set it totally asunder.

SPEAKER NICHOL: One minute.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Finally in terms of the Schmit amendment I want you to understand that the supporters of this bill are essentially prepared to follow the property tax relief issue, but it needs to be done in a thoughtful manner and as I will discuss with you later on, there is a thoughtful manner in handling that and I'll tell you what it is. This particular amendment that we're now doing on 662 does not disturb the Schmit language, does not even touch the Schmit language. It is left in the bill. With that I would move that the bill be returned to Select File.