

Mr. President.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Would you like to close, Senator Lamb, please.

SENATOR LAMB: Yes, please. Mr. President and members, I would like to take you back a little ways when we started this bill. Remember what the problem was? Tax equity. Remember that? They said that the Class I districts were not paying a high school levy, that they are paying user fee, just paying a user fee, which, well, it is nonresident tuition, you could call it a user fee, I guess. It is a pretty high user fee in some cases, but it is. So what I have tried to do is meet that criticism head on, meet that criticism head on and say, okay, we are going to have those high... those Class I districts supporting a high school with a high school levy and that essentially is what this amendment does. Now we keep...now if we meet those objections, then they come up with other objections. You know, well, you know it doesn't just work right in every situation, kind of really not a very good argument. But every Class I school will then be supporting, under this amendment, will be supporting a high school, paying the levy like every other person in that district. They will be paying the levy. That is tax equity. I have tried to meet the objections of the people who introduced the bill and eliminate, eliminate possible tax havens. We are willing to pay the money but what the people out there really want is that Class I school, their grade school close to home. That is what they really want. Ninety percent of the people don't care about how the taxes come or go as long as they are reasonable, but they do want those youngsters at home. Now under a merger proposal there is no way that can happen because many of those districts are going to want to split up and there will not be a viable grade school left there and so you won't have that small school close to home. I have tried to meet the objections of the present system with affiliation. I ask that this amendment be adopted.

SPEAKER NICHOL: The question is, shall the bill be returned for a specific amendment? All those in favor vote aye, opposed nay. Three are excused. Senator Lamb.

SENATOR LAMB: I would ask everyone to punch in, please.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Okay.