

SENATOR HARTNETT: This has no fiscal impact. It is found on page 16. Simply what it does, it relates to special education back to the public schools. It strikes the intent language from line 7 through 12. As you know, all of you know that have been in the Legislature and for the new members, special education is funded in arrears. The service goes on and the school districts then ask the state for funding. What this amendment does is to freeze special education funding at the present level. I am against this amendment...the intent language. Next year there is going to be a study to look at this language, or look at the special education. But I think it is wrong to put intent language into appropriations bill because next year the federal government is dropping physical therapy and occupational therapy from their programs, which is going to cost the local school districts \$500,000. Basically for special ed. services at the local level it is based upon laws that have been passed by the federal government and laws that are passed at the state level. So I think we owe this to the local levels to not put a cap on it. If we're going to put a cap on this area then we should put caps on all areas of spending for state government. So I think we are just simply...the Appropriations Committee simply singled out one particular area, special ed. I'm opposed to this. I really think that this intent language should come out of the bill because when the special ed. services are required, so what we are simply doing is shifting more back to the local property tax. I think we had a vote earlier on a motion by Senator Johnson about the \$18 million, and that failed. But I think this is simply going to raise local property tax because that is where schools get their monies from. So I simply would have your...would ask for your support to oppose this intent language and vote to strike this intent language from the appropriations bill, 722. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Warner. May we have the conversation level (gavel) turned down, please. Your voices reverberate around the Chamber. Senator Warner.

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, this was an amendment we discussed on General File. For five years now, five sessions rather, we have been discussing what might be done in the way of cost containment for special education. There have been bills introduced,