

changes over the next year to the way we handle special education costs and programs. So I would oppose Senator Hartnett's amendment.

PRESIDENT: Senator Nelson, do you wish to...Senator Arlene Nelson, do you wish to speak on the Hartnett amendment? Order in the Chamber, please. (Gavel.)

SENATOR NELSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I also rise in opposition of Senator Hartnett's amendment. Having served on the Education Committee, this is particularly an area that I see that we need some cost containment or at least the programs to be reviewed. They are telling us that the Education Department does not specify what Level I funding is, and that we are setting up guidelines, and it will pass on to local property tax. But we simply have to get a handle on this. It is a program that they hire the teachers in June and then come around in October for us to pay for what they have hired and so on. I truly feel that this program does need some looking at. This is simply intent language. We've had letters, how can you do this, we were told that this is federal money coming, 90 percent of it is federal money and now you are cutting our money off as if that money just fell out of the sky. They, too, I think...I'm not saying that all schools, absolutely not, are taking advantage of this program. But again, back to my alcohol tax, we cut back the money there. People in need, and I'm not saying these people are not handicapped, but again we have to get a handle on this budget. This is one area that I believe if we would simply freeze it, or not...and do this interim study this year, that we must look at this program. Some schools 1 student in 12 is in special ed...

PRESIDENT: (Gavel.)

SENATOR NELSON: In some schools 1 student in 12 is in special education. We must review it. I'm definitely against Senator Hartnett's amendment.

PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator Nelson. The Chair would interrupt debate to announce that Senator Richard Peterson has guests in the south balcony, 60 students who are from the fourth, fifth and sixth grades from Battle Creek Public School at Battle Creek, accompanied by their teachers. Senator Harris also has guests in the south balcony,