

budget deliberations we've got to see the forest for the trees and the forest is that we have an overall state budget including cash funds, including roads funds, of \$1.9 billion, of almost \$2 billion, and for us to tell the taxpayers back in our district, for us to attempt to do what we can to restore that measure of public confidence in the financing of our government and do our part here at the state level to restore that measure of public confidence, we surely can find \$14 million in additional cuts to forestall the necessity of an income or sales tax increase. Now we've had some discussion earlier about what is the easy way out and what is the hard way out. This is my seventh session down here and it's certainly my observation and my feeling that the easy way out more often than not is to acquiesce to the demands of the people in the lobby and to sort of in a low level, low visibility way rubber stamp through a 1 percent increase in the income tax or a half cent increase in the sales tax or whatever. And the hard way out is to keep our feet to the fire, to really work at it, to really go through a budget of \$1.9 billion and find the \$14 or \$15 million we need to avoid a tax increase. Now the United States Senate last week I thought took some heroic actions in the decisions that they made. Surely there cannot be a tougher political decision than freezing Social Security benefits for a year and surely there cannot be a more difficult political decision of some levels, given the current feeling towards defense expenditures, than freezing the Department of Defense budget to an inflationary increase. And I think our task here takes considerably less political courage than that, considerably less determination than that because we have far fewer cuts to make and once again I don't think there is any question that if we work hard enough at it, we can get the job done. Now the reason I think this \$14 million decrease in this fashion is a good idea even though I don't like across the board cuts, I don't think they work in many instances, is because then it will give us something to deal with. Then those on the Appropriations Committee and elsewhere who were the most knowledgeable about the way the state budget works can go back and bring an alternative set of \$14 million cuts to us which we can then have the option to adopt or not. In other words, by implementing this 2 percent cut and bringing the budget down by \$14 million, that doesn't end the issue by any means. We can view that as a message to the Appropriations Committee and other interested legislators to go back to work, to sit down with their feet in the fire or