

thing I can see are two exclusions that do make sense and those are the two that I would allow for. That would be for the claims against the state. You've got to pay the claims. You can't cut those back so that doesn't make any sense and the other thing is retirement. On retirement, as you all know, we have an obligation. We've got to pay in a certain amount in retirement. It's like the salary. There is really no option to it and so you can't really cut back your retirement benefit payment. You're going to have to pay what you've got to pay. So other than that I don't see any of these other programs, agencies or functions that can't be cut just like everybody else. Oh, they're probably on hard times. They're needing assistance just like everybody else. I don't doubt that and we can all get up here and talk about each one of these as being good programs and I don't disagree. But there's a lot of other good programs that are still included in the across the board cut and I'm saying it's not fair to go after them and not these people. Now I'm sure many of you have been approached again by the MR people in particular. They're probably the strongest group that will oppose inclusion in the across the board cut. Well mental retardation is obviously in need of more support and I do support their efforts, but we do have in the budget already a \$6.8 million pick-up of the county portion of Medicaid so that the counties are going to save \$6.8 million in property taxes through this budget already. Now the amount we're going to cut for MR funding is far, far less than that \$6.8 million. I think it's more to the tune of half a million or somewhere around there, maybe slightly more than that, but certainly the counties with that tax savings from the Medicaid pick-up can more than cover the cost that we're going to cut from the MR budget and at least hold the line on MR funding, maybe even provide for an increase with that sort of tax savings that they are going to receive this year. So that is the biggest, probably best supported part of the exclusions and I'm suggesting to you that they can't justify being excluded either. Even though I care very much about mental retardation services, there is the potential for support out there among the counties and we are providing for that through the \$6.8 million Medicaid pick-up. So I'm saying to you I'm not going to support any across the board cut that doesn't have everybody in it that ought to be in it and I hope others of you feel the same way about the fairness and equity argument. Let's not have a cut across the board for some, but not all groups and think to yourself about how you can justify these exclusions and I