

form, and you are going to get your property taxes cut, and then we say to them six months later after they have been down there, after they lined up in the assessors office, oh, we were just kidding, we were just fooling, we really didn't mean it. Again I really don't know what to recommend to the body, whether defeat of this motion and defer the homestead, defeat of this motion and go ahead and fund it on hoping that we find other cuts in the budget which is unrealistic, or go ahead and defeat this and pass the tax increase measure...

PRESIDENT: One minute.

SENATOR WITHEM: ...for this purpose which is not to fund a state government program but which is in fact to shift taxes from an overly burdened tax source, the homestead exemption. I don't know what to recommend. I guess for that reason all I am doing is saying I plan on voting against this motion and hope that something else comes along to resolve it. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Lamb.

SENATOR LAMB: Yes, Mr. President and members, as has been pointed out, this is a tax relief program. We have a lot of people who want property tax relief and, of course, the proposal was that that would be shifted over to sales and income tax which is probably okay, but now we are at the point where nobody is willing to come up with \$18.3 million to fund it. Nobody is willing to put that in their budget. So the only logical thing to do is to repeal it, repeal the homestead exemption, and as Senator Withem pointed out, yeah, that looks bad. We pass it one year and repeal it the next year but what is the alternative? Come up with the \$18.3 million to fund it. Otherwise you know very well what happens in the counties. Each homeowner gets a \$3,000 reduction in the valuation. As a result of that, the levy in the whole county goes up and so the other taxpayers in the county, property taxpayers in the county wind up paying more. So it is property tax relief in reverse for those other taxpayers in the county and that absolutely is not fair. We need to either fund this program or repeal it. There does not seem to be any inclination on the part of this Legislature to fund it so at this point the only alternative is to repeal it. I hope you do.