

I've been in this Legislature I would guess that the state ownership of that land causes more problems out in the western part of the state than any other single thing. The management of that land is very difficult. At the present time there is a bonus bidding procedure which the local people don't care for. It pits neighbor against neighbor. And the general consensus is, that rather than buying more land, that the school land should be sold. It would have been fortunate had that land been sold say three, four, five years ago when land prices were high because the income from that land is not great. And the schools are not benefiting to any great degree, at least if there are other investments where that land will return more for the benefit of schools than having it in land, particularly at the present time. So, I would oppose bringing this bill before the Legislature. I have been tempted, in the past, to say that we should have two sections in every township across the state owned by the state for school purposes, because as you probably know most of that land now is in the western part of the state because in the eastern part of the state it was sold some years ago. So the problem is confined, primarily, to the western part of the state. It is very difficult, for those of us who are in a decided minority on this issue, to get any legislation passed which modifies the unfortunate circumstances that people find as a result of the ownership of that land in the western part of the state. However, as Senator Harris said, the amount of land that would be purchased would be quite small. It would not affect this total situation to any great degree, nor would it affect land prices statewide, which may be a commendable effort as a result of this bill. But it would not do that. So, I'd just have to conclude that this is a bill which does not deserve to be revived. In addition, although the school district which has school land within its boundaries fares fairly well with the in lieu tax formula we now have, the other subdivisions of government, which contain this school land, do not. In other words there is no tax paid for county services, for NRD services, for tech schools, for the local fire district, for any other subdivision of government, other than the local school district, and of course school districts statewide. So other than the schools the area in which this state owns school land is located does suffer from a tax inequity. So, because of all these reasons, I suggest that this bill not be revived.

PRESIDENT: Senator Schmit.