

a bill that asks for the Mullen Hospital to be able to increase their tax levy?

SENATOR LAMB: Yes, Senator Smith, but I think we should consider these each individually on their merits and I would be happy to (interruption).

SENATOR SMITH: Well, I think (interruption), thank you. I think education is very meritorious. Thanks a lot. Okay, and to Senator Abboud in case he did not receive satisfactory answers to his question, I want to remind him that the levy will only be increased by a two-thirds vote of both boards. So that is locally controlled. It is because of the declining valuations in the land in the rural areas that this is necessary to maintain the same level of services. We are not asking for more. We are asking for a continuing level. It is very short term. It is needed to maintain those programs that are existing, and I want to emphasize that it is an emergency measure only. For those that have a concern, including Senator Hartnett, there is a piece of legislation that is being prepared right now which will address it and will change it so that areas would base their property tax authority on actual tax revenues instead of valuation. And now I will relinquish the rest of my time to Senator Nichol. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Senator Nichol, you have about two and a half minutes.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you, Jackie Smith. May I just say in the western part of the state we do need the increase from 4.2 to 5 cents. Do you realize that the other institutions, educational institutions, took a 2 percent cut, that community colleges took a 3 percent cut? So I think we should really keep that in mind. Other institutions took a 2 percent cut, community colleges took a 3 percent cut, keep that in mind. Senator Lamb, in our area they have basketball. The attendance is good and they are making money at that. If it goes to the place where it is losing money, I may support your idea of cutting out athletics, but as long as it is making money, I think it is okay to let them continue to make money. Third point, with the unsettled, with the unsettled situation involving real estate property tax, I really think this is proper to allow the 5 cents at this time for this area. Senator Landis and the committee that studied the tax