

SENATOR ABOUD: Question.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Thank you. You were the last speaker. Senator Vickers, would you like to close on your motion to return?

SENATOR VICKERS: Yes, I would, Mr. President, thank you. Mr. President and members, again I want to emphasize that it is a matter of philosophical fairness. If it is fair to go one direction, that is lower the levy when valuations increase, and I recognize that that may be happening in some of the urban areas of this state, then it is fair...it seems fair to me to allow a levy increase when the valuations decrease. Now to Senator Johnson's point about it taking away some of the ability of the Legislature to examine those levy limits, I would argue, Senator Johnson, that that levy limit is still in statute and that levy limit applies to increased growth. The levy limit would apply to increased growth. Now, as I indicated in my answer to Senator Hartnett, I do not know what the technical community colleges want as far as this piece of legislation is concerned, whether or not they would agree that they wouldn't need Senator Nelson's bill. They may believe that they need some additional growth in some areas. I don't know that. If they do then it would be up to this body to see what that levy limit should be. Should it be 7 cents, should it be 8 cents, or conversely 6 cents? I don't know. But I would argue that that levy limit then would apply to growth. But the budgetary process, we wouldn't be brought in here and whipsawed every time the valuations go up or down, which I think is what happens right now. I would also argue that it would make it easier even for the public schools, the political subdivision entity out there that doesn't have a budgetary or a levy limit. It would make it a little easier for them and the county commissioners, it seems to me, to be able to figure things out because it would obviously always be able to fluctuate. Now, again, I want to emphasize this doesn't allow increases in budget if they are up to that statutory limit. It only allows a status quo. Now I think that if it is fair that the status quo should be applied on increasing valuations, then I urge you to adopt the same philosophy, that the status quo ought to be applied on decreasing valuations. Thank you, Mr. President.