

is not that much if we can come out of this with a better educational system. Now I know there are those of you that say, well, the Department of Education is top heavy and it's a good target and they ought to be able to find the funds somewhere else to do it. Well, we're directing them here though. They are not going to have that fund from somewhere else. We're not saying they can take it from somewhere else. We're saying we're going to take it all out of the implementation of 994. Let me point out to you, I don't know whether other state agencies have done this or not, but I know personally that the Department of Education has reduced their staff over the last four years by about 10 percent. They have not replaced something over 60 staff people. Now I don't know whether other departments have done that or not, but it is an indication to me that at least those folks recognize that they've got to tighten their belt and to some degree they have already begun the process. I'm not suggesting that they shouldn't tighten their belt. I think they should. And if somebody can find another 30,000 somewhere else to take out of some other section that's fine with me, but I really, seriously plead with you to at least continue this one segment of quality measurements that we had started. And I don't undertake this project lightly, but I would remind all of you, and this is not an indication from my part that I think the Appropriations Committee did anything wrong, but the Appropriations Committee is made up of members of the Legislature as all of us are. We all have our own little differences in philosophy and each committee that we serve on is a reflection of the various committee members' philosophies. And it seems to me that each of us have the right to try to exert our philosophy on the appropriations process as it gets to the floor. So I would hope that the members of the Appropriations Committee would not take this as any indication on my part that you have not done an outstanding job, but rather that, as in any other bill, out of any other committee, all of us have a right to try to influence our philosophies into it. My philosophy, as I indicated earlier, is very simple. Even though we are in very difficult times, I think it is time to inject a little bit of optimism and that we really are going to come out of this in better shape and by completely withdrawing and saying we're not going to do any of that measurements, we're not going to change our system at all, I think would be a terrible mistake. I urge the adoption of this amendment. Thank you, Mr. President.