

confusing. We had 662 which was an indication of lack of support, maybe, in some people's eyes for state aid to education. Perhaps, in fact, it was more of an opposition to an increase in state aid to education being paid for through an increase in state taxes. The governor's race was also kind of a mixed greeting. We had two governor candidates, both of whom were against tax increases at the state level, but one of whom was more interested perhaps in property tax reduction than the other, and yet support wasn't there for that. We keep hearing about property taxes being too high and people being upset about them. I don't quite know how to read yet what happened in November. So, I'm not sure what the people are saying. So, as we look at the cuts this special session I didn't want to be in a situation where we misread the public and put back in the money for state aid to education and then went ahead and cut some of these other programs that I think are as important, and perhaps maybe even more important. But there is one fundamental thing that I think we have to realize. I guess we are going to have to take it one step at a time. If you take the one step of education, you've got to recognize we are inadequately funding education now, our state aid is too low and should be increased, despite what the electorate may have said, despite their concerns. In this case, I think that we have to recognize that the figures are there to support increased state aid to education. Yet we are talking about a reduction there that I think many of us realize will end up only resulting out of program cuts, which I don't think we need, or in increased property taxes, which I don't think we need. In economic development one of the few things that we have as a very positive sign of this state is a good educational system, whether it be the secondary schools, or in the postsecondary schools, we have got a good education system, good public education system in this state. It is an attraction that draws in people and retains people. I think it is one of the strengths we need to build on, not weaken. Weaken it we will with this proposed cut. With that, and looking over the situation, my thought is we ought to reconsider and take another look at the Withem amendment, and I'd ask your support for that reconsideration.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Thank you. Senator Higgins, then Senator Chambers.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Thank you, Mr. President. After just cutting the education of the mentally retarded, those who are not able to do anything in the way of self-education, such as reading and