

CLERK: No, sir, I do not.

SENATOR CARSTEN: Okay, then we move on to...we've got another bill to advance, right?

CLERK: Yes, sir.

SENATOR CARSTEN: Let's move on to that. Which one is that?

CLERK: Mr. President, LB 2 was a bill that was introduced by Senator Vickers at the request of the Governor. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on December 5 and referred to the Education Committee, advanced to General File. There are Education Committee amendments pending, Mr. President.

SENATOR CARSTEN: Senator Vickers, do you want to take the committee amendments, please.

SENATOR VICKERS: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, members, the committee amendments to LB 2 can considerably change the bill from its original green copy. The committee has dealt, obviously, with this issue of special education quite a bit in the past few years, and have worked very diligently in its attempts to find some ways to help hold down the ever increasing costs, while still providing the necessary services of special education, realizing that most of the mandated services of special education were federal mandates. So, I hope you all keep in mind that we are dealing with a federal program, a federal program that if we deviate very much from, we could get in real trouble in terms of court cases or in terms of dollars from the federal government that we could stand to lose. It is more a matter of what the committee amendments are doing. It is more a matter of trying to soften the impact to the school districts of helping hold down the costs, while at the same time helping hold down the cost at the state level. In other words, the committee was concerned that we didn't just cap the cost at a lower percentage figure rather than the 90 percent reimbursement at the state level, and then force the school districts to turn to the property taxes for the remainder of the amount when, in fact, the mandates were still there just the same. So, the committee amendments reflect that attitude and that attempt by the committee. Let me try to explain those committee amendments. First of all, in special education, by rule, not by statute, but by rule there were three different levels of service, Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3. And a better