

understand a couple of things. First, I think you need to look at...when we debate the entire budget you need to look at least not just a snap shot of where we are today on May 18th. I think you need to look back on the entire two year period, because we have been in a reducing mode for the last two years, at least from the base perspective. And the fact is you look at state operations and state operations in higher education, we have reduced them to the tune of 4.5 percent. There are some components of state government that are not even fully restored in LB 330. So they'll take a reduction over and above that 4.5 percent. And if the Legislature goes along with both our 541 recommendation and LB 330...so the fact is on the state side of the equation we have reduced in the last two years, and continue to do so to some extent even with the passage of LB 330. So the one thing is that we reduce state government side of things by 4.5 percent, at least 4.5 percent in the last two years. During that time I know it was the opinion of the Appropriations Committee at that time, myself included, and possibly the entire body that before you start cutting back aid to local governments, before you start cutting back on things like developmental disabilities, we need to do what we can on the state government level first. I think we've done that. We did not in those times, while we were dealing with state government, both in the biennial budget last year and the special session of '92, we did not reduce appropriations in an area like this, or an area in aid in general, we did not do that. We solved the problem on our side of the equation. Coming into this session we still have a problem. We may well have a problem next session, too. But the fact is even where we stand right now, the area that Senator Wesely's amendment talks about not only do not take a 4.5 percent reduction ever, it is not being...it is not being asked to take the 1.5 percent cut that the majority, 98 percent of the rest of the aid programs are. The only thing that this area is being asked to take is a .7 percent reduction. That is while state government is taking 4.5 percent reduction in the base, that's while other components of our aid program, and I'm sure the cities and counties would argue not only is it 1.5, but there's other things that we've done to them as well. So it's not like we've tried, to the best of our abilities, to be cognizant of the fact. I know Senator Byars makes it very hard to say no, and he makes it very personal talking about someone in my district. But the fact is, you know, where do you want to do it? We have tried the best we can to spare this program the knife for the last two years. Unless you want to seriously start talking