

within the Class VI district are extremely competent and extremely capable and do a fine job of managing their finances. And it would seem a shame that you should saddle one school district in a Class I...one Class I school district in a Class VI with the...with the same spending...same spending methods, I guess, that another Class I district would have. It doesn't make much sense to me that you would say that, for instance, a Class I, if you're looking at the whole county when we have a General Fund levy of .667 all the way down to a .214 that you should say that these people should spend the same amount or they should be tied to a common levy. And this just is not...it discourages economy. It discourages thrift in spending and I think that it counters the whole effect of the Class VI system. So I would urge that you not support this amendment. Thank you.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Dierks. Before I proceed to the next speaker, I would like to introduce some guests of Senator Day. Under the south balcony we have Senator Day's daughter-in-law, Lisa Walters, and her daughter, Molly. Would you please stand and be welcomed by the Legislature. Thank you for being here. Senator Withem.

SENATOR WITHEM: Yes, Mr. Speaker, members of the body, feel a need to respond first to what Senator Dierks had to say because it's erroneous and it's the type of rhetoric that gets bandied about here when we're trying to have serious conversations about issues. It's the type of rhetoric that's bandied about that our friends in Washington sometimes use to inflame passions, but it bears no relationship to the fact. This amendment does not eliminate Class VI school districts. It does absolutely nothing with the legal structure of a Class VI school district. Currently, every Class I school district in a Class VI has an independently elected board that hires teachers, fires teachers, sets policy. The high school district has an independently elected board from throughout the Class VI that hires teachers, sets policy. With the imposition of this amendment, that structure will stay in place indefinitely until such time as the citizens of that district see fit to change...see fit to change it. All it does is provide an equitable distribution of the K through 12 tax system within that Class VI, the identical distribution of the K through 12 tax responsibility that exists in every other school district in the state. That's all this does. Senator Bernard-Stevens, in his speech this morning, did make reference to the fact that there are more draconian methods