

To the Editor:

Whoever is in charge of sound bites in the Scott administration gets a gold star. That \$26 million is a whopper. After hearing that it's very difficult to hear anything else.

It's very similar to what dogs hear. I've heard that when you talk to your dog this is what he hears: Blah, blahhh, OUT, blahbla, blay ayal blah OUT blalla blahhh blahbl ahh, ahhblah EAT, bla bblaay, EAT, bah blaah blaah blah OUT blaah blahh...

Once Gov. Scott's message team came up with that number, no matter how often you try to point out it's exaggerated, or not true, all the true numbers and facts that you present sound like this: Blah, blahhh, blahbla, blay ayal blah \$26 MILLION blalla blahhh blahbl ahh, ahhblah bla bblaay, \$26 MILLION, blah blaah blaah bblah \$26 MILLION blah blaah.

It's understandable. All that money! It's very distracting. The fact that it is actually only \$13 million (the savings wouldn't start until 2018), that many contracts have already been negotiated is true. The fact that local negotiators would save that money all by themselves because it's built into the new contracts is true. State government negotiators wouldn't be doing anything different. The true facts can't compete with, well, you know.

What it does do is allow the state government to butt in and take over the negotiating process. And with Scott's plan the money saved would wind up in state government control instead of where it belongs—in the communities where it came from. But that's the whole point. He doesn't trust local communities to do what he wants them to do. It works to make Governor Scott seem like the great tax reducer but in fact he is the great usurper of local control.

I know. I know. Blah balh blah blah.

Lori Claffee, Springfield