

PRESIDENT MOUL: One minute.

SENATOR ASHFORD: And, with that, I will give, I'm sorry, Senator Landis, the rest of my time to him.

SENATOR LANDIS: I'll await my speech in the normal order of lights.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Okay, thank you, Senator Landis. I will recognize Senator Hall, followed by Senators Chambers, Landis, Warner and Beutler.

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Madam President. I rise in opposition to the Landis-Ashford amendment. It is clearly a political issue. Senator Ashford, in his conclusion, stated exactly what the entire issue is. It's a political one. It's one that emanates from a very political individual who, for political reasons, started this process. Historically, the Legislature has been audited. We have allowed for a financial audit of our records. We have traditionally done that, that information in terms of the dollar figure that is spent has been published. It has been open record. It would continue to be to an even greater extent under LB 579. Under LB 579, as it's written today and is in front of us on Select File, the Legislature is held to a higher standard than any other agency of government. There is a requirement that we be audited at a minimum at least every biennium. The last audit that was performed on the Legislature goes back to five years ago before it was put into process. The Legislature, under LB 579, will be the most scrutinized area in terms of telephone records of any agency in the state, but yet we make up a minugia of the total cost of those phone calls. On one hand we have the Auditor who argues that he has inherent powers with regard to the ability to monitor or audit phone records. If you buy that argument, then you have to also say that that inherent power carries with it constitutional duties, constitutional duties that would require that those audits be performed. The fact of the matter is they're not, they're not being performed. When asked what agencies the Auditor had audited recently, the report that I received last year showed that less than 10 percent of the entire phone budget had been audited, the long-distance calls. The agencies that were reflected in that represented...the vast majority of them were commissions or boards. The only substantive agency that was audited was the Department of Roads.