

I was discussing with Senator Schimek, that we are still on the Wesely amendment, which is the MR amendment.

SPEAKER BAACK: That's correct, Senator.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: I rise to oppose the amendment. My heart says yes, my common sense from the committee perspective says no. Just wanted to give a little bit of perspective, if it has not already been put into the record. This was part of the 1.5 across-the-board cut in state aid. The committee felt like Senator Wesely did, that this was a very difficult cut in the areas of mental retardation. And, in fact, the committee felt it was so difficult that we made one of the few exceptions on state aid, the 1.5 cut, and we went back and put...restored, in the P2 budget that we have before us today, LB 330, half of those cuts have been restored. And I think that was a good thing to do, I wish we could have done more. I guess the bottom line is I think we need to keep where we're at right now on the budget. If you start looking at the green copy of the green sheet on the budget picture, you're going to notice where we are in the outlying years, and where we are certainly for this biennium. The revenue package that we are going to talk about some time later this week, or next week, we're assuming that those things that passed that are on Select File on the revenue package will, in fact, advance. And that may be a very false assumption. We may have to go back and pare back things that will...are in...that hopefully will be in 330, depending upon what that revenue package will look like on Final Reading. Now is not the time, in my judgment, to begin adding things back in. We, in fact, may have to take it out again. And it would be far worse for us, as a body, to begin putting things back in, then later on, on Select File, on a revenue package, vote not to agree to certain taxes that were on the table, and then come back and tell those in mental retardation, hey, you know the money we restored for you, bad news is we have to take that and more away. Those are games we don't want to play with people who really need money and whose hearts, all of us want to do everything we can in our hearts to help them. We need to defeat this amendment and simply play things by ear as they go on revenue...on the revenue package side. I understand what Senator Wesely is trying to do. You know, my heart is with him doing that, we just can't afford to do that right now at this stage. And I urge that at this point at least we defeat the Wesely amendment, advance the committee amendments, move on to the other items, then we'll have the whole picture on Select