

also in support of Senator Dierks' amendment. The issue of the \$60,000 and the opposition raised by members of the Appropriations Committee, I guess I was surprised to realize that we have, what, a 3.2 billion dollar budget and we've got to narrow it down to a gap less than 60,000, otherwise we have to vote for a tax increase. Kudos to the Fiscal Office staff. But in any case, the issue here is not one of how much is this specific amendment going to cost us today. It's more like the old Fram oil filter--you can either pay me now or pay me later. Do we put \$60,000 into education funding for this type of a program that has the potential, if we want to save, I guess, dollars, we could wipe out the program altogether? What's the cost going to be down the road to us if, 1, 2, 5, 20, 50 individuals, because we cut this area of funding, this area of education, don't know what preventions could be taken or how the disease is acquired, how it's transmitted, what are the costs to us then at that point when we have another 50 people that are on the welfare rolls for purposes of being indigent because they've basically run out of resources to take care of their own health care? What are our long-range costs in terms of this type of funding? I would argue that \$60,000, yes, it's not a drop in the bucket, but in the whole scheme of things as it relates to the long-range effect, the positive effect this type of a program can have it is imperative that we think about restoring this funding, and I would call it restoring, for purposes of allowing that the educational materials get out there so people understand so that we have the fewest number of cases possible. If they can be prevented at all, we ought to work toward that and to spend \$60,000 at this point to adopt the Dierks' amendment, I would argue that it is money well spent and that it is...has the potential to save us millions of dollars down the road for purposes of the long-range cost to care for individuals who have acquired the AIDS virus and basically are in the...at that point, under today's technology, today's data, are in the process of dying and that's what we're talking about here. If we can prevent some people from finding themselves in that situation not only have we saved some lives but we've also saved a tremendous amount of health care dollars that are otherwise going to be spent for that purpose and I think that the 60,000 in the Dierks' amendment is a preventative measure. I think that it has the potential to save us tremendous dollars down the road and if it's enough, in all fairness to Senator Bernard-Stevens, to trigger a tax increase it's a good enough cause for me to vote for that. With that, I would urge you to support the Dierks amendment.