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LB 661

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the Legislature. I introduced LB 661 this year and Senator Hudkins was kind enough to prioritize this bill. This deals with the year 2000 computer problem, Y2K. This is designed to address it at the state level. This is not designed to be a global pie in the sky. Hopefully, this statute will pass and hopefully you'll never ever have to use it. I must tell you that when I first began to look at the issue, I'd read it in magazines and so on, I sort of pooh-pooed this as one of those techie things that will never happen. And, you know, this is like a lot of things--it'll pass and it isn't a big deal. The last six months I guess my attention has probably been turned to this and I've probably become more of a believer that I don't think a catastrophe is going to happen. But I do see that there's the opportunity and there may be the problem and there may be the chance that there will be some small glitches or there will be some glitches and where are those most likely to appear. They'll probably appear in those institutions such as state government, local political subdivisions who are open 24 hours a day who can't shut down their operations or their business because they're dedicated to the public 24 hours a day. The same thing is probably true with financial institutions. Between political subdivisions, the state and financial institutions, they are what I would call fundamental things to society to keep our society operating particularly in our state. And it's our faith, our public faith to keep those going. The Y2K problem, just for those of you who don't know what it is, I'm going to try to put it in as lay of terms as I can. When people were building computers, they wanted to conserve memory. And so when they put in the computer, instead of putting all four digits for the year, they just put in the last two which were fine when you were in the sixties, the seventies, the eighties, and the nineties. But all of a sudden a few years ago, and I think that there's people who would tell you that some discovered this sooner rather than later, but that for a good number of those computers when you got to the year 2000 nobody thought about, hold it, when it becomes 00 for the last two, does that mean 1900 or does that mean the year 2000? And so for some computers, most of them will have trouble reading that and will either spit out a whole lot of information or will just plain shut down and not be operative. I suppose 15 or 20 years ago that wouldn't be such a problem; but for those people