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FLOOR DEBATE

April 26, 2001 LB 849

of...for payment of claims that have been made against the state. Under the state administrative departments and independent boards and commission statutes, beginning on 81-8,209, the claims process is described. The Legislature created the State Claims Board and granted it authority to act on behalf of the state in the determination of tort claims against the state and to investigate and approve of "nontort" claims, such as miscellaneous claims against the state and agency write-offs of uncollected debts. The State Claims Board simply performs an administrative function for the processing of claims, many of which are processed without the involvement of the Legislature. No legislative involvement is necessary under most circumstances, but legislative authority is required by statute for some of the board's actions. When there is an appropriation that needs to be made, legislative action is required. This is why LB 849 is before us, so that the claims made against the state that require appropriations can be approved. Tort awards in excess of \$50,000 are reviewed by the Legislature. Miscellaneous claims against the state in excess of \$10,000 must receive legislative approval. Any miscellaneous claim under \$10,000 may come before the Legislature for approval if the affected agency does not have the funding for payment of the claim. And, lastly, the agency write-offs or cancellation of charges must be presented to the Legislature. These debt "cancelizations" are made by agencies for their own accounting purposes so that they can clean out their books in each...in each instance the agency determined that the debts are not collectible. That's why LB 849 is here. It seeks the legislative approval of certain actions of the State Claims Board in approving payment of claims to authorize certain state agency write-offs. This is all I'll explain at this point. The committee amendment and the amendment to the committee amendment adds certain sections, so I'll explain them more in detail once we've opened on those. That's my opening.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Committee amendments. Did you open on the committee amendments also?

SENATOR CONNEALY: The amendments...

SENATOR CUDABACK: You're recognized now to do so.