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FLOOR DEBATE

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SENATOR SCHIMEK: Yes, thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. I rise to introduce the committee amendment to you. And I want to make a preliminary remark or two before I explain the committee amendment. First of all, Senator Beutler referenced the agreement that was made between Senators Beutler and Brashear. And I don't take any credit for that. I think that was their deal. I signed onto it as the Chair of the committee. So it is a credit to them both that they have agreed to solve this once and for all. Having sat on Government Committee nearly every year since I've been in this Legislature, and particularly since the 1996 implementation date, I can tell you that we've had a number of bills before the committee to improve the act, we always have that kind of legislation after prior legislation is passed, and to actually put the expenditure limitations at different levels as time has passed by. Nothing has ever quite worked, because of the divisiveness of this particular issue. So I would like to personally give credit to both Senators Beutler and Brashear for their agreement to either improve this bill, or this law, or do away with it. And that is your choice today, and I think it's a very, very important choice that you are being asked to make. And I appreciate the fact that people really are paying attention to the debate. The committee, you will note on the committee statement, did advance the bill, and the record shows 7 yeases with 1 absent. And in fairness, I need to mention that the committee weren't necessarily advocating for the bill one way or the other, because I have to tell you that the committee had some differences of opinion within the committee. But they agreed to bring this bill to the floor at the request of Senators Beutler and Brashear, because they felt that they wanted to honor their agreement, and also, perhaps, they felt that this does need to be taken care of. So I wanted to point that out to you on the committee statement. Third, I want to mention to you that the Beutler amendment does incorporate the committee amendment eventually, and the Beutler bill...or, the Beutler amendment does amend the committee amendment. But here's what the amendment does. It simply clarifies the definition of an expenditure. With the amendment, an expenditure includes the repayment of loans to the candidate committee, when any candidate meeting the requirements of subsection (4) of