

SENATOR HANNIBAL: Thank you, Mr. President, members. I'm rising not to take a specific position on the bill or the indefinite postpone motion, but rather to talk a little bit about money and what this bill might do. I hope that you've had a chance to look at the fiscal note on this bill. It doesn't really say too much as far as numbers, but it does say an awful lot as far as the impact that a bill like this could have. If the bill does not do anything, if it will not affect us, if it will not put more people in prison, then, of course, the question is why do it? And the only answer I could come up with would be, as Senator Chambers says, because we say we've done something, we've done something good and we can wash our hands of the problem. I don't think that that is the case. I think the bill could do something. And what it could do is impose the mandatories, raise the mandatory, the minimum sentence from what is now 15 months, a year probation, up to a minimum, a mandatory sentence of 3 or 5 years. What does that mean to us? Forget the emotional issue, and I have some real concerns about what Senator Chambers is saying. I believe that this will not do anything other than just send a little message out there. It's attacking a symptom and not the problem at all. I wholeheartedly agree with Senator Chambers there. Obviously, the answers lie in a long-term solution to remove the environment, remove the causes that make this so attractive; that's no easy task. But let's look at the impact of the mandatories. Right now you are likely to have before you, in the next two or three weeks, a \$10 million bill presented to you by our committee for increases of prison construction, because we are over capacity right now and we're going to be, probably, we have tentatively talked about increasing our prison structures to the tune of about \$10 million over the next two years. Even then, with the current rate of incarcerations that we have at the end of the next biennium, we will still be over capacity. It's very likely we'll be building even more, or required to bring to you that proposition. If this bill is going to increase mandatory sentences, you must be prepared to say, yes, we want to send this message out there, we want to be hard on the drug dealers, if this does it, if it doesn't, I really don't know, I think it does not. But if we are going to do this then you better be prepared to stand on this floor and vote the dollars involved to prosecute, to house, and take care of these prisoners and build these facilities. And we're not talking \$10 million now. You start talking about adding, doubling these sentences, here you're going to add another