

on the floor this morning, this bill is designed to use up the surplus. If there is not adequate surplus next year then we'll consider what has to be done.

SEN. WYER BARRETT: Amendment on the desk, Mr. Clerk?

CLERK. Mr. President, Senator Withem would move to amend the Conway amendment.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Withem, please.

SENATOR WITHEM: Mr. Speaker, I do not...I just had this amendment drafted this morning. I did what is a dangerous sort of thing for a senator to do, I actually read the Journal this morning and I came across Senator Conway's amendment and thought, heavens, we don't want to do that. I was kind of agreeing with Senator Lamb's viewpoint. And I guess the rationale is I'm not convinced, at this point, that we need adjustment in taxes to make this cash flow. And part of the problem is you see fiscal office projections, forecasting board projections, Don Macke projections, lots of other projections out there it's hard to get a handle on what's actually there. And I've kind of come to the conclusion that we're really not going to get a handle on what is there during this session, because so much of it is, rightfully I suppose, based on speculation. What's going to happen in the ag economy? What's going to happen with the drought? What's going to happen on the national level? What's going to happen to interest rates? What's going to happen to inflation? All of those sort of things. We're probably not going to have an accurate handle on it. So what I proposed, kind of scratched it out on a pad here, and kind of went up and confessed to Senator Conway that I was doing mortal damage to his amendment, and found out in discussion that conceptually we're kind of in agreement on this. And I think what we'll be doing is I'm going to be withdrawing this amendment, he will probably be withdrawing his, and we can discuss a little more detail on what it is we want to do. What I'm suggesting with this amendment is that we don't raise the sales tax at this point, but that when our reserve, General Fund balance reserve goes below 4 percent, at that point that triggers that level of reserve, triggers an increase in the sales tax rate of one-half percent. Now I have absolutely no idea whether 4 percent reserve is the proper trigger or not. I throw this out as...for purposes of discussion and consideration as a potential compromise on this whole issue of tax increase,