

can use that money to carry out the rest of the year...the rest of the second year of the biennium. If they receive no money, then the Legislature next year will have to come back to the Appropriations Committee within the process and will then have to make a decision, is this a worthwhile thing or not? But I certainly think the Legislature owes it to the people in the State of Nebraska who are working for government contracts, who have received government contracts, it is an economic benefit to the these companies throughout the State of Nebraska. I think we at least owe them to say, let's wait and see how we are on the bidding process. Let's don't close it down and then see if we get something and then decide what we're going to do. That inconsistency in the process does not help that. So I hope that the body will go with this amendment. It is a reasonable amendment and one that is sustainable within the budget. It is a one-time cost and I ask the body for its approval. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. For purposes of discussion, Senator Hannibal.

SENATOR HANNIBAL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members, Senator Bernard-Stevens, don't worry, be happy, you've been happy but nothing lasts forever. I am going to oppose the amendment and I'm...and Senator Bernard-Stevens is correct in his little dissertation as to the history of the Procurement Office as far as how the request came to our committee and what has taken place since then. The request did come to us as a replacement of federal funds because federal funds were going to be declining. Only in the last two days have we heard a different story. It's interesting how things are in such a fluid state in not only this particular program but in many of the programs that hit this particular agency. The Department of Defense did give a grant and the program started back in '86-87 fiscal year and it grew from 21,000, I think, up to about \$53,000. This program was never asked for, it was never authorized by this Legislature. It wasn't necessary to do so because this was federal funds, federal grant from the Department of Defense. So we never had a hand in suggesting this is a good idea or a bad idea and we never had to even make that decision. But now the department comes to us, the Department of Economic Development, and asks that since all of a sudden some of these federal funds may be, or as a matter of fact as presented to us would be dropping by 20 percent a year, we were asked to pick up that declining balance with General Funds. Finally, we were in the process and they asked us to do that. Not only did they ask us