

don't know if we're going to get a vote on it or not but it's going to happen, it's going to be law. We're going to have a \$100 million property tax relief bill come across our desk that the Governor is going to sign. I don't know if we're going to vote on it or not. However, we do have some serious problems with our budget, people. We have been adding money like a 100 million is no big thing and it's important to me that at least I talk to you about whether we can afford to do all these things we're doing or not. As I started to say, Senator Peterson had two options, one was to ask for a straight-out increase in appropriations to DPI. Being the fiscal conservative that Senator Peterson is, he elected to go with option two which is...which makes at least more sense to me that we're going to shift money out of DPI's budget from one area to another. At least that's not a budgetary hit, an increase like the rest of you colleagues have been doing the last couple, three days. However, what is it doing to us? He is dipping into an area that we did fund, as a committee, and it's a \$1,300,000 to give to the Department of Public Institutions that money and match it with federal funds for one purpose and one purpose only and that was to be in compliance with OBRA, the Omnibus Budget Reform Act, more specifically part of the Nursing Home Reform Act and the Nursing Home Reform Act told us, mandated by the federal government, that we must do a couple of things. First of all, we must have preadmission screening of our patients, if you will, to make sure they're going the right place and this screen is going to be expensive and we don't even know for sure what the regulations say on how we're going to achieve this but the regulations book is 400 pages long. Secondly, we have got to develop...we have been mandated by the Nursing Home Reform Act to have alternate placement facilities between Norfolk Regional Center's types of operations and nursing homes or just being put back out on the street. So we've got some funds there and this is what the department asked for and they asked for the flexibility to be able to use those funds to meet the highest crisis areas that we have. We have given them those funds. One of the highest crisis options could be opening the wing at Norfolk Regional Center, 34-bed wing. That's one of the options that the director could do under the funds that we have. What Senator Peterson would ask you to do is don't give the director of the Department of Public Institutions that flexibility, don't give him the chance to put those funds where we think the needs are the highest but go ahead and open that Norfolk Regional Center, that extra wing, that extra 34-bed wing, whether or not we think it's the highest