

SENATOR WESELY: What some of us are trying to do is to share with you why we're fearful of this, why we think what looks like a good idea on the surface may, in fact, be a very harmful activity that could again not help economic development, but actually harm economic development, because if those offices turn into the sort of PR offices I'm talking about, people will again turn against the department, again have the litany of problems we've had with that department. Senator Bernard-Stevens talked about the Legislature shouldn't have oversight over this, that's an executive branch decision. Baloney! This Legislature sets the policies. We're the body representing the people here. We're the ones to look after the best interests of the public and time and again we have been flaunted by the Department of Economic Development in what we've asked that be done. First off, the field office problem that we had serious problems with. We had a tourism contract. This is back with Governor Kerrey at that time where they completely circumvented bidding procedures and ended up causing a great controversy back in '85-86. The NDBG block grants, you remember we had a problem there. They ended up instead of going on merit, they went first come, first served. Do you remember that? I don't know if some of you will remember that, but instead of prioritizing where those went, they decided to change the whole system without telling people about it and it was a first come, first serve and it was a complete mess. We had staff turnover that was unduplicated by any other agency in the mid-eighties. Now this is all under Governor Kerrey. This is problems that are inherent in that office. We then went into Governor Orr and there we had the problems with the western Governor's Office, we had money diverted from one fund to another fund, if you remember. They used it to open the western Governor's Office. I called them on that and they finally said, okay, we were wrong. The Attorney General intervened and we changed all that and now they are pulling out of the western Governor's Office. They flaunted our appropriations process, they flaunted our legislative statutes and then they turned around on the telecommunications division that we had passed and ignored it. They went two years without funding, taking the funding without implementing that program and now they're turning around in a bill to eliminate it. They used the money for other purposes. This department has got to be brought under control and this Legislature is the only oversight function that can actually see that that happens. And if you don't recognize the fact that we have an oversight over there, that's what