

SENATOR WESELY: Is the basic decision then...okay, I know they have indicated that they have lost money over the course of the last year or so. They are anticipating just taking that loss, is that not correct? And, so then the real issue is anticipating further losses over the next two years, and that is what this resolution addresses, is that not our situation?

SENATOR HANNIBAL: That is correct.

SENATOR WESELY: So, the solution that the Appropriations Committee is taking is to examine the issue in the executive branch, to look at the options we have, and to wait and see how things develop and perhaps reimburse these people for their losses that may occur in the course of the next year?

SENATOR HANNIBAL: If that becomes the decision of the executive branch and the State Personnel Office that it would be in the best interest of the state to look at the current contract and possibly renegotiate with either the carrier or the state employees, that is what we are asking the executive branch to do.

SENATOR WESELY: Okay. And the legislative role, our branch of government's role is simply to at this point looks like to send the ball back into the executive branch court, is that what we are doing?

SENATOR HANNIBAL: Well, not completely, Senator Wesely, but essentially, I guess, that is correct.

SENATOR WESELY: Okay, let me just add a word of caution here. I have been involved in a lot of different health care issues obviously over the years, but one I have been concerned about for a long time is state employee health insurance, and in that regard, I have tried time and again to change the state employee health insurance plan to save money. I have noted time and again it is costly to us, that it does not feature a number of things that would contain costs and still provide appropriate, adequate, fair coverage for our state employees. I think the Legislature has an oversight function here, and I am more than willing, at this time, to acknowledge that we are out of time to deal with this issue, but I, for one, do not want to turn over the matter to the executive branch and simply have them decide what is best for us. I think the legislative branch ultimately pays for whatever decisions are made over there, and we have