

override, there technically is no way that the body can actually force the medical center to, in fact, administer what...the intent that we're trying to do. Is that correct?

SENATOR BAACK: Well, in visiting with Senator Warner, I think this is fairly binding language to the university but we cannot force them I guess to do exactly, but it is fairly binding language when you're talking about an appropriations bill.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Okay. Members of the body, I think what we have here is a chance to make actually a policy decision. Many of our decisions today are going to be whether or not we simply want to spend the money or not. In this regard this particular override will not deal with money in regards to putting money into...back into the budget. It will have to do with money in regards to the medical center because they are going to have to find those funds elsewhere and I understand that, but we do have a policy decision that we, the body, can make today and that is, do we as a body feel it is a good policy for us to pursue rural health care in communities where it is very, very difficult to get rural health physicians? One of the things I'd like to remind the body is a type, what it takes for a physician to go into a rural area. Many of the rural areas obviously now do not have a physician so any physician that goes there is going to be one of those physicians who is going to be willing to go seven days a week, on call seven days a week, and your life and family are dedicated to that community and surrounding area to dedicate it to medicine. It's a tremendous sacrifice and one that is not easily made anymore given the current attitudes of physicians in regards to families and what have you. Anything that the state can do to encourage a physician to go into a rural area is a tremendous need and I just would like for many of you to put yourself in a community or an area where you have a son or a daughter who is extremely ill and the nearest physician may be 60 miles away and you don't even know if they are going to be there at the time, maybe they're on vacation or some place, you have nowhere to go. It's a terrible situation. It is one that the body can address in this bill and it does not cost any more. Though certainly the medical center will have to find the funds elsewhere and Senator Baack has already indicated that next session he would come back with a bill that would put money back in to help negate the cost of the fund for this year. It's a policy decision. I think it's one that the Legislature should make. Thank you.