

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator McFarland, please.

SENATOR McFARLAND: Yeah, I would like to respond to two things. Am I on? Senator Hannibal questioned about how clear the Attorney General's Opinion is. If you look on the first page where it says, "Spire says public entitled to know state bonus pay", at the bottom of the second column it says, "Not a change", and underneath that it says, it quotes from the opinion, it says, "For example, a list prepared by the agency of those employees who receive bonuses and the amount of each bonus could be kept confidential", the opinion said. And it goes on to say, where the Tax Commissioner says, as I read the opinion, "It basically confirms our previous position on this matter". That is the issue for bringing the resolution. That is the issue where it's unclear and now the Tax Commissioner says this morning that, yes, in fact, even though he is not compelled to disclose that information under the Attorney General's Opinion, he is going to do so at this time. I think that brings to light a whole lot of questions about what...how things are handled in particular departments, particularly with respect to the bonus issue payments. And the suggestion has been made, well, are they being distributed for political reasons and not for performance reasons. I just ask you, there is...one of the articles that I have handed out, it says, "State official's letter draws Hoppner's fire", and then above it it says, "LB 775 success stories sought". And it goes on to talk about a Department of Revenue person who is the department's Public and Governmental Affairs Counsel, who has been sending out letters to corporations around the state and asking for the good news stories on 775. And then it says, we are seeking these good news stories and then a quote, "Please note that this good news information will be considered public information and may be released to the media by the department or the Governor's office." Now this has been a controversial question, the tax policies and the tax credits imbedded in 775. Here we have a Department of Revenue employee paid with state tax dollars, soliciting information on a policy implemented by the Governor's office so that the good news can be distributed to the media. I don't think that's an appropriate use of that official's time. If that person wants to work on the reelection commission...committee for the Governor, he should be a paid staff member of the reelection committee. He should be a campaign manager or a campaign assistant or something like that. We should not, as a state, be paying tax dollars in salary to this particular person so that he can solicit information to