

SPEAKER BARRETT: One minute.

SENATOR WESELY: ...that if the employer fires this individual and doesn't want to have to pay unemployment benefits, there ought to be also some obligation on the part of the employer to have insurance, but if they don't have the insurance, all it means is that that employee is still going to get the benefits, unemployment benefits. And we talk about a drug-free workplace, a drug-free workplace is not free. It costs money. It will cost money to rid ourselves of drugs. It will cost money in a lot of different ways and one of those ways is to try and provide treatment for these individuals with a problem. I simply am bringing to you a serious concern about the amendment that was adopted on General File, what its implications will be in the real world and I'd ask your consideration of this amendment to deal with that problem.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Morrissey, please, followed by Senators Coordsen, Hall and Ashford.

SENATOR MORRISSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members. Senator Hefner convinced me that I should vote for Senator Wesely's amendment. He said this would effectively gut the bill, which it wouldn't do because, if you remember correctly, the bill is unemployment compensation. This amendment would neutralize the punitive effects of Senator Hefner's amendment, the disqualification for unemployment benefits for drug testing. It is a change in state policy as was Senator Hefner's amendment. Senator Hefner's amendment was a big change in state policy. He did have a bill in committee, but it didn't just slide out of committee by any means. It had to scratch and claw its way out of committee and the amendment was not exactly like the bill that came out of committee, so we can't just take that word that it just came sliding out of committee. There was a lot of discussion over many days on that particular bill that turned into an amendment. But the basic question to me is what Senator Crosby brought up, is this the right thing to do at this time and do we need a study? I'll agree a study would be good and by adopting Senator Wesely's amendment you can neutralize the effects of Senator Hefner's bill, the effects that it takes a citizen that is down and has low self-esteem that has a drug problem and penalize them by disqualifying them for unemployment benefits, penalize them, their spouse and their family, penalize the employee, the spouse and their family, further push them