

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you, sir. Senator McFarland.

SENATOR McFARLAND: Mr. Speaker, I'd respectfully call the question.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. That won't be necessary, yours was the last light. Senator Wesely, would you like to close on the adoption of your amendment?

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members, I apologize we've taken a little time on this, but it's a fundamental issue. We're concerned about...if I could have...

SPEAKER BARRETT: (Gavel.)

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. We've spent a little over an hour on this and I apologize for taking the amount of time. This issue is important. The question is, we have the goal of a drug-free workplace. We have the initial step of trying to say if you get into a treatment program then the unemployment benefits won't be denied to you, but it doesn't take into account the ability to pay for the program. As Senator Chambers and Senator Ashford, Senator Hall, Senator Morrissey, as others, have indicated, how do we pay for, in some cases, this treatment program that the employer wants to have the employee get into, that the state, the society that we live in wants that employee to go into, the employee themselves want to go into, but simply don't have the resources to get into? And the problem is, there are public programs out there but you wait simply months, months to get into them and in the meantime, your unemployment benefits are not available because of this situation. You're denied the access to that funds, it is a horrible situation for these individuals who are trying to deal with their problem, and want to deal with their problem, but cannot afford to deal with their problem. And so I think it simply is the key issue here of moving together with recognizing the fiscal restraints some families, some individuals have placed in them that do not allow them the opportunity, if they so choose, to deal with their drug problem. So I would ask for the vote for this amendment. If we need to deal with further amendment to it, I'd be willing to work with Senator Ashford and Senator Coordsen on this, but fundamentally the way the bill currently constituted is simply unfair. It is not fair. It is well-intentioned, but not fair, and so with this amendment we bring back that element of fairness, of equity, of treating people with the way I think we