

January 14, 1991

(Bernard-Stevens amendment can be found on page 164 of the Legislative Journal.)

SPEAKER BAACK: Senator Bernard-Stevens.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: In the melancholy of the morning, I just don't want it to slide by without any discussion. Sometimes rules for members, particularly new members that are here, sometimes rules come back to haunt you in the end. And I think there is kind of a...oh, kind of a different type of attitude, I think, in the body today because of the midnight tonight deadline and all other things that are on the minds of the body. Senator Lynch, my amendment simply does the following, it simply says that if the committee has not held hearings with the appropriate agency, that any amendment that that committee makes towards that agency does not have any other...any more priority than any other committee...than any other amendment. And the reason I say this, I agree with what you're trying to do in opening up the process. I've been frustrated with that for a long time, as...and you've, obviously, been frustrated longer than I have. I agree with the idea of letting committees be more involved in that appropriations process. I agree with the idea of committees being able to have hearings on all the education, for example, bills that have come through the Education Committee, and they set their priorities, they work hard for what they think is right for the state, but yet it cannot be done on the appropriations side because there has been no give and take. I understand that. And I understand why committees should have more of a say in that particular process. But it seems to me we defeat our purpose if we then go and say any committee, any standing committee can offer an amendment to the budget on a particular agency at any time and give them priority over someone else, even if that committee hasn't taken time to review, with the agency, all the ins and outs of that particular budget. I would assume that the Appropriations Committee, in spending hours, and hours, and hours in discussions and listening to all of the ins and outs of that particular budget committee, will have a certain rationale of why they may or may not choose to put something in the budget. It seems to me that a Standing Committee should at least, if they are going to have a priority amendment, say we have a deep concern with this, we, too, want to know the ins and outs as best as we can, we want to listen to that, we want to analyze that, and after we hear as much of the data as we can, then we want to conclude