

January 14, 1991

done in Appropriations, but a modified hearing so that we can all have a give and take. And, after that, if we see that there clearly is something that needs to be done, then we can do so, and we can make an amendment on a priority basis, and that's what should happen. And Senator Lynch is right. But to say that any committee at any particular time can have five votes, or in some cases six votes to get a priority on something that we think may not necessarily come up fast enough in the session because money has run out, I think is going to make a shambles of what we've got here. I will admit it will make the game a lot more fun. And for Senator Beutler, who I have not had the privilege to get to know very well, I would just comment that I have utter faith in "Senator O'Donnell" and the committee chair so that they would at least know whether they had a hearing or a get-together with the agency or not. I don't think that would be a major problem for the body to understand or for the Clerk of the Legislature to understand. That's a very, very minor, minor, minor point. The process, ladies and gentlemen of the body, is that we have amendments we offer to the budget, and they will be in a certain rank in a certain order. And the game will be who can get theirs up first, who can get theirs up first. And now we have another avenue...

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: ...to get things up on top. And the committee doesn't even have to know what they're doing on the entire budget process, it's just something they think needs to be done. I think it's a simple amendment. It's a good amendment as far as clarification, and it puts some responsibility on the committee themselves to say we have at least had the interest to take the time to look at this a little more thoroughly, because we really do have a concern here. We really do think there should be something done that the Appropriations Committee has not. And for the Rules Committee to say that, hey, the committee doesn't even have to take any extra time, they may be too busy, there may be other circumstances, i.e., they don't want to take the time, but we're going to give them priority, I think is stretching it just a little far on the appropriations process. I hope you would agree with the amendment, it does not emaciate it, it simply strengthens it to say if you're going to have a priority amendment, you need to, as a committee, take time to look at the agency to make sure you're doing...