

look at what we're looking at right now as far as the budget projections are concerned and saying, well, we're going to have to spend like 25 million for salaries and for increases for all these other folks that we're very concerned about, these folks have had an increase year after year. Maybe the time has come for us to take a look at how we're spending our resources. I'm not talking necessarily, Senator Peterson, about saying, I'm going to increase taxes. I'm saying that maybe the time has come for us to look at what the priorities are and should be and maybe do a little adjusting. And all I'm asking is that this take its place, as we've been doing, and I mentioned in my first testimony, take its place in line with all other bills that have an A bill attached to it and say, okay, at the end we're going to have to decide what is most important. In the meanwhile, because we have now put in place the opportunity for us to take a look at budgets, we can say, well, maybe this is more important than some of the other things that are already happening out there or maybe there could be a little cut in some of the other areas. So I'm just asking you to be willing to say, okay, let's vote to put this across the floor, we'll hold it up at the end, it will fall in line with all those other bills that have requests for spending and then we make a determination at the end about how we spend the finances that are available to the state. You know, I would remind you again, as I did earlier, there is not a lobby for us out there for this group of people. This is the only kind of lobbying those people can do when they write their little letters to me from their nursing homes or when I visit and see the situation that they are in there. And I would just like to read a little part, in closing, from this one letter. This little old lady who is in her eighties is the advocate for the nursing home in Hastings that she lives in. She said, I am in a care home. As is often the case, after so long our money is gone and we have to swallow our pride and accept welfare. We all know, by the way, and I'm not saying this from her letter, what it costs to stay in a nursing home today. And you may have thought you provided for your retirement, but little do any of us know what tomorrow may bring and you may have thought your assets were going to take care of you for the rest of your life. These people are not there because they want to be there. They thought they had provided in many cases and so their money has been spent. They are now down to the fact that all they had left of their resource was that monthly Social Security check which, as many of us know in here, is not adequate even for those that are out. So the money is taken, they are now able to retain \$30 a month