

just a few offenses is well over a million dollars of fiscal impact. It frustrates me, it makes me angry, and I know you as somebody who has been very, very instrumental in increasing penalties and very concerned about youth, I applaud you for that, I agree. At the same time, I want to share my frustration with you about what it costs on the back end, and I know that you're going to work between now and Select File to look at that fiscal impact and to help us deal with that problem. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Kristensen. Time is gone. I'll recognize Senator Schmit, followed by Senator Pirsch. Senator Schmit, would you like to be recognized? Okay, Senator Pirsch.

SENATOR PIRSCH: Thank you. I did want to respond to Senator Kristensen and Senator Moore. The fiscal note that you are looking at on Senator Hefner's bill which was killed was the million dollars. This is significantly smaller. And while we are getting tougher on those drug pushers, also at the same time our jails are by majority full of check writers, child support payment avoiders and those kinds of people that I think we could look at in a more productive way than just say, well, heck, we'd better not increase penalties for drug providers. As you will remember, I introduced the house arrest and the electronic surveillance. I think those kinds of things could be used more creatively to reduce our prison load. I think there are other things that we could look at, but I'll tell you one thing, that just to throw the baby out with the bath water because our prisons are overcrowded, I think is the wrong message to send to drug pushers. If you are going to say, well, my goodness, we just can't enforce any more drug laws because our prisons are overcrowded, I think that's the wrong solution. Yes, we have a problem in our prisons and, yes, we have to address them. We have to look at alternatives and we have to look at perhaps private prisons which is a bill that's up before the Legislature this year. We have to look at creating perhaps programs for those who have various forms of drug crimes. We have to still pursue the drug education and the prevention, but again I say that, in the long run, we have to have the interdiction and we have to have the law enforcement to continue the downward trend that we are seeing in the drug war. I don't think now is the time to get soft on those drug criminals. Now is not the time to say, oh, well, gee whiz, that kind of criminal, do we want to get tougher with? Let's look at those other populations that are in our prison. Let's think of creative ways for those who