

CLERK: Mr. President, the next amendment is by Senator Hefner. Senator, your amendment is on page 2042 of the Journal.

SPEAKER BAACK: Senator Hefner.

SENATOR HEFNER: Mr. Speaker and members of the body, I'm here today to offer AM1720 and you'll find that on page 2047. (Journal shows AM1730.) And this deals with the Leadership Academy Act that we passed a couple of years ago and last year was the first time that we held it and it was held, I believe, out in the central part of the state. But what this amendment does, this strikes the Nelson amendment which eliminated the Youth Leadership Academy Act and the \$70,000 that went with it, and my proposal would add \$15,000 per year for this operation. Last year was the first year that we had this leadership academy and I thought it went over real good, and this academy is proposed to take care of some of the kids that display leadership qualities but are not invited to, like, the Boys State or Girls State or some of the other conferences that we have across the state. It's to help more of the underprivileged students that we have in our state. So this is why I'm offering this amendment. I tried to amend this into Senator Nelson's amendment when it was on General File, but I was unsuccessful, so I want to bring this before you again, but please keep in mind, please keep in mind the purpose of the academy. It was created for youth who show leadership abilities, but who may not otherwise be academically gifted. It gives students who are at risk or who are not in traditional leadership positions a chance to learn about leadership and focus on development of those skills. There are lots of leadership programs for the more academy gifted students but there's a void for the students who are not at the top of the class and this is what this would take care of. The Youth Leadership Academy offers them this rare opportunity and sometimes, some place, if we can help these students, well, they turn out to be terrific leaders not only in our state, but across the country and I cannot deny that the academy held last year was a financial fiasco. It was. I agree with that, but maybe some of the burden should have been on us who passed this bill or passed this law and then gave it to the Exec Board or gave it to the research group to implement it and I'll agree, they went hog wild. But I believe it's wrong, I believe it's wrong to throw out the whole program when with a little more guidance from Exec Board it could be a success with lots less dollars and the 15,000 that I'm proposing, that's