

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Wesely. Senator Wesely, did you wish to speak again? Yours is the only light on.

SENATOR WESELY: Well, let me...maybe I should just go ahead and close. I don't know if I'm ever going to convince Senator Moore of this, but I really think it's a mistake to not proceed with the idea that is embodied in this amendment. Currently there is a voc rehab program the federal government has set up. We don't...there's a maximum amount the state can utilize of that, that they then match four to one. For every dollar we put in, we get \$4 of federal and they allow us to do it up to a certain level. We're 284,000 short of it this next fiscal year, 400,200 of it short the following year. We...in voc rehab we already spend much more than that through our present budgets in mental retardation services. So what I'm saying is we've got money already spent on this, laying on the table, we're already spending in this area. Let's authorize the Department of Public Institutions to work with the Department of Education and just use it to match and bring in four times the amount of money from the federal government and utilize the amount authorized to us. It won't impact the maintenance of effort because we're already saying we can...at the current level, service is at 2.1 million, we're able to continue that and I'm saying this additional amount of money is there, will always be there and there's no problem with maintenance of effort. We will miss an opportunity if we don't adopt this amendment of additional million dollars a year in voc rehab money to help train our mentally retarded citizens in this state. It won't cost us a dime more in the budget, in our own budget, it will bring additional money the people have been asking for and demanding. We've had conflict for years on this issue because the Department of Education has not wanted to move into this area. They have decided that it is important, they want to move in this area. They're agreed to this amendment. The Department of Public Institutions is agreed to this amendment. I met with the mental retardation regions last night and I had indications they support the amendment and it doesn't even force anybody to do anything other than allowing us to move forward if after all these entities get together, it makes sense. So I can't see where we lose on it. We lose nothing by adopting this amendment. We have the opportunity to gain an additional million dollars to help train our mentally retarded and developmentally disabled citizens. I ask for your support for this amendment. And Senator Smith has some questions if I have very much time left.