

have been doing all along.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Seeing no one else wishing to speak on this amendment, I will recognize Speaker Baack for closing.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Madam President and colleagues. I will close on this amendment. Senator Warner asked me to do that, because I was one of the members of the Executive Board that voted in favor of this amendment to be added to the budget bill. In the...this is probably...this is my seventh year here, and I don't think I've ever asked for additional dollars in the budget. I've never gotten much involved in the budget debate, but I think this is one of those situations when it's time to stand up and be counted for this. I think that it's been explained very well by my colleagues that this is a very unique situation. Our employees are in a very unique situation. They have no job security, they differ from state employees in a lot of other ways. And I think that this unique situation calls for unique action on our part. And I know that we will probably come under considerable criticism for doing this, because we came under considerable criticism when we bought new chairs for the hearing rooms, when we had new desks in our offices. I'm willing to withstand that criticism. I think that if anyone is going to take care of our employees it has to be us. There is no one else out there to look out for our employees, they're not unionized, they're not represented by any bargaining unit, there is only one entity that can take care of them and that's us. The senators have to take care of our own employees. And this is a situation where we can do that. This is a one-year situation, I want that to be very clear. We voted in committee, I supported the first motion that was to do it for two years, but then at that point we didn't have the votes. We then had another motion to do it for one year, come back in another year and review the situation. So I support that, and it is only a one-year situation. I think the Executive Board has made a determination that they are going to review our whole pay scale and everything over the interim so that we have a better idea of exactly how we do stand with all other state employees. But I think no one has fought harder for our employees in this body than Senator Chambers. I've been on the Executive Board now this is my fifth year, and Senator Chambers has always fought very hard for our employees, and we need to appreciate that, and the employees need to appreciate that. Senator Chambers has also done a marvelous job of working hard for us and looking out