

study resolution to look at the CHIP program for both the Health and the Banking Committees and so we do plan to work with the insurance department on conducting the study that this amendment would authorize.

**SPEAKER BAACK:** Thank you, Senator Wesely. The next speaker is Senator Landis.

**SENATOR LANDIS:** Members of the body, I just want to summarize two points that Senator Wesely talked about. First, the \$25,000 for this study is Cash Funds already held by the Department of Insurance, raised from the insurance industry in the form of fees that we collect from them and is an expense that does not come from the General Fund. And, secondly, this is a problem, the CHIP program and its costs which is growing exponentially. It has a carry-over effect to the General Fund in that half of insurance premiums are designated for the General Fund of the state, half for local subdivisions, and we historically have gotten a good take from the premium tax but the CHIP program is financed as a premium tax offset and we are having one of our best revenue sources dry up because of the growing premium tax offset in CHIP. This program could not only grow beyond the premium tax, it could grow into a major General Fund item, unless we get a handle on it now. It's all the more reason why the study has to be done in a timely fashion. This is one of those ones where you may not spot the broken wheel or the squeaky wheel yet, but if you don't act now, it will come upon you in three or four years in a tidal wave and it's time to act on this in an expeditious fashion. Senator Wesely is quite right to bring the amendment now. I urge us to adopt it.

**SPEAKER BAACK:** Thank you, Senator Landis. Senator Rogers.

**SENATOR ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker and members, I wholly endorse this amendment also. I think, unless some of you have had some constituents in your district that needed this program, you probably don't realize how important it was. There was a couple in my district that actually had talked to me for a year. They came down and testified at this particular...right, is that okay? But, anyway, I wholly endorse this amendment and I think that those of you that are aware of the program will support it also. Thank you.

**SPEAKER BAACK:** Thank you, Senator Rogers. Anyone else wishing to discuss the amendment? Senator Wesely, do you wish to close?