

take this opportunity as we're discussing advancing the bill or not. I want to go back to the financing of a portion of the bill. And I want to pick up on where Senator Withem was taking the discussion and taking it one step further. There is a possibility, assuming again that the bill advances, which you and I both know is...may or may not happen today. But assuming it does advance, it's your understanding that there would be an A bill that would be put together somewhere between 50 to 100 thousand dollars?

SENATOR BAACK: The preliminary discussions have centered around those numbers, yes.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Okay. Now is that money basically for setting up the mechanism, setting up the supervision, or is that simply money going into a pool that might be used to give to candidates in the future, when it's...un...in...in next year's election, not this years?

SENATOR BAACK: A good share of those dollars would be used by accountability and disclosure to set up the mechanism.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Okay. So, that's one of the points...thank you, Senator Baack. That's one of the points that I wanted to bring up. And again maybe in Senator Baack's closing, if he wishes, he might speak to some of the others, or I may give him some of my time at the end, if he wishes to comment on some of my points. One of the problems that I've had is digesting this particular concept, and again I do not...I praise Senator Baack for attempting to work on a very, very difficult area. But I do have some difficulty if technically this year we're not putting any funds into it. And we're talking about public funding. But if we don't put any funds into it, then we go next year, and again we all know what the budget is going to look like next year, or at least the potential for the budget next year. The potential is for a major shortfall, a major shortfall that we may have some very difficult times even making our ends meet with Medicaid, let alone trying to make the regular budget process...the ongoing programs that we have to hold the line. I suspect we're looking at some serious budgetary cutbacks. In that light of that...of that budgetary process, I'm really, in my mind, wondering how many dollars would actually be available from the general treasury to go into the financing of a bill that we had advanced, or maybe pass on Final Reading. I could see very