

CLERK: Senator Bernard-Stevens, your amendment, Senator. (See Bernard-Stevens amendment found on page 750 of the Legislative Journal.)

SPEAKER BAACK: Senator Bernard-Stevens.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the body. This is a difficult amendment for me to propose simply because as the bill was originally introduced I was a cosponsor. However, as the bill's worked its way through from last year onto this year and the discussions I've heard on the floor, off the floor, during the interim, in my mind and, of course, Senator Wesely would probably want to bring it to a vote to verify one way or another, but in my mind I don't think the votes are there to pass this bill at this time. I wish it would be different, but I don't believe the votes are there. So, I offer this amendment as an alternative that the body might be able to consider, that might pass. And again I say might. What this amendment would do is the following, this amendment would say, if we have, as a body, difficulty in mandating to businesses what their leave policy would be, whether it be 100 or more, or 50 or more, or all through the state, if that's a problem, if we have a problem of...of working with the different...which agencies, or excuse me, which companies have a good policy, which ones do not, and should we get involved in that process, if that indeed is the problem, one of the things I think we might agree upon is that the Legislature does have authority, we do have some responsibility in one particular area that is not a mandate on anyone outside, and that's our own state employees. So, this amendment would basically say that there would be established a parental leave program, similar to...similar to what Senator Wesely, though somewhat different, for state employees only. Again, this amendment would only deal with state employees. It would basically strike the Wesely amendment and the Wesely bill, and make the bill pertinent to state employees. State employees, for example, even our own legislative staff, when they have, if there's going to be a pregnancy leave, what do they...what's the policy that we have, for the most part? Well, the policy is that you can take your sick leave, whatever you've accumulated, and hopefully you still have some accumulated, hopefully you haven't been sick before that time. You can take some of the sick leave that you might have left, and if that goes you might be able to take a leave of absence, but during all of that you're not going to receive any pay check. And then you're given the option, you've given the