

I have proposed here in this amendment would still involve the Legislature, would still involve the Fiscal Office and, in essence, would still be a legislative function. But what my amendment would add to the mix would be the State Auditor's Office, which would mean that you wouldn't have to set up an entirely separate agency or bureaucracy, if you will, to do it. And the State Auditor does have the ability right now to do performance audits or evaluations, however you choose to call them, and there is a difference, but he has already hired somebody to head up the unit in his office that would do these kinds of audits or evaluations. In addition, he has three auditors in the office already that have received specific training for doing these program evaluations, so that I would contend that it would be possible for the program evaluations, once the committee is established and once the bill is on-line, to go ahead and do program evaluations immediately. I think this would be one...one advantage of this particular amendment. I also think it would be an advantage, in a sense, to have a check and balance system here. You have both branches of government involved and...but with...with the Legislature having the final oversight and with the danger of an elected, one elected official being able to play politics, for instance, with the audits. That wouldn't...I don't believe that would happen under this...under this system. I might also tell you that we would now be the only state that would be involving the State Auditor in these kinds of audits. There are six elected state audits who do conduct performance and/or economy efficiency audits and they are in Kentucky, Massachusetts, Montana, New York, North Carolina and Pennsylvania. There are, in addition, 32 state auditors who conduct performance audits, not all of them of course elected. With that explanation, I would encourage you to consider this amendment and I'd be happy to try to answer questions. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Schimek. I'll now recognize Senator Beutler, followed by Senators Warner, Wesely, Moore and Bernard-Stevens. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Warner, a couple of questions if I may, just to get a better perspective on how our program would work. I realize this isn't the subject of the amendment, but I thought I better start better understanding how our program would work. First of all, it would be limited to a review of state agencies as defined, I suppose, in Section 3 on page 5. The constitutional officers, would they be exempted from review?