

include the consolidation to parole of those probation officers, whether or not it would be vetoed. And the Governor stated on the record, that he would veto that. Well, I, because there has been no objection to the making that shift in terms of the pay raise, clearly, there is an inequity that has existed there for a number of years, but...and we addressed it last year but it was vetoed. Now it comes in as a consolidation issue, which is fine, but there are some of us that just don't think that consolidation issue would make sense. If it were not, or there would not be the support for it rather if it were not for the fact that there was a crying need for a pay increase for those individuals. That's an issue that I think is high on a number of folks' agendas with regard to appropriations. To bracket this bill, I mean I don't support the underlying amendment that Senator Bernard-Stevens had for 500,000 either, the reduction. This 6 million dollar figure probably is an appropriate figure. I have an amendment, at least one right now, probably a second to follow, that tries to earmark, as best possible, where those funds can be spent so that they are not spread out across the board and diluted in terms of their impact. I think that what we need to do is spend this kind of money on those small businesses, those upstart type of operations that will grow and become part of our economy and provide the jobs that we may not attract with the bigger economic development packages. So for those purposes, I mean to sit and wait and say that somehow 425 should be bracketed till, I believe it was May, the first week in May, May 5th roughly, May 2nd, I don't know what it would be, and wait on the budget, it makes little sense. I think we make the decision today or in the next day or so on this issue and say it is going to be a priority for us, and then make the adjustments, if necessary, if needed, within the budget package that the Appropriations Committee sends us. I don't think we do it in the reverse. I think what we do is we say this is a priority for this body and send that message to the Appropriations Committee, as they package for final introduction their ultimate bill, not the other way around. So for those reasons, I stand in opposition to Senator Bernard-Stevens' bracket motion and the underlying amendment that would reduce those funds. Thank you, Mr. President.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Robinson.

SENATOR ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I guess I want to say a couple of comments on what Senator Engel said after Senator Stevens put in the bracket motion. If we are