

good a good realistic approach. And one advantage, I think, to our committee system is that we don't get bits and pieces of the legal system. This year we had a bill in dealing with the issue of increasing the salaries for judges 3 percent or a percentage yet to be determined. We had a big issue dealing with probation officers, whether or not they should get a raise, correctional officers, how the whole system works together, whether or not we should expand or what approach we should take on prisons, should we privatize them, should we continue to go with the system of public financing? And I think that when a committee only deals with one particular small facet of a larger issue, such as the legal system, that they don't understand the big picture and they have less appreciation of the cost that it takes to operate the system. Now we have a problem in this state with our probation officers, and Senator Lindsay has a priority bill dealing with that issue in that we passed a bill that provided for, I believe it was in the neighborhood of a million dollars for additional...and I'm not sure of the exact amount, but it was a rather sizeable amount of money that would have gone towards increasing the salaries...

SENATOR CROSBY: One minute.

SENATOR ABOUD: ...of probation officers. And I've been a supporter of that idea and I've always believed that with that particular issue that you have to adequately fund these types of state employees. But last year we passed a bill and it was vetoed, and this year we've been grappling with the issue on how to go about adequately funding it. Now, I guess, just like the Appropriations Committee, you look at the priorities and where we should be spending our money and I think our committee does that. And I think the fact that this may, in fact, be a worthy issue but, in the big scheme of things, it's not quite as important as some of the other issues that we should, I feel, be spending the money. And, as far as the amendment that's been offered by Senator Beutler, I think it's probably a realistic approach on how to adequately divide up where the money will be going and will not be going. So I will be supporting his amendment.

SENATOR CROSBY: Time. Thank you, Senator Abboud. Senator Maurstad, on the Beutler amendment.

SENATOR MAURSTAD: The committee amendment.