

these employees exist only when they're there doing what we want them to do for the state's convenience, but if they fall on hard times or suffer an illness what becomes of them? It's something I think we need to think about. I wouldn't even try to do it on this bill. It couldn't be done on this one if we wanted to, unless we were going to gut it and redo it, which I know we're not going to do. But I hope you'll at least think of that idea because something may come along that will make it possible.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Senator Bernard-Stevens.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you. Senator Wehrbein, this is the final questions that I have, at least here, and it's not necessarily on this bill. It's more on...on the budget that will be coming forward. The...your indication was that, I want to make sure I have the numbers right, that in the budget now they had about 3.1, and in the budget you're going to propose in the next fiscal year, they'll still be right around 3.1, so they'll be about the same. And what...I guess what that would mean is that the extra 700,000 they got they would have to be trimming back between now and that next fiscal year. They wouldn't have that much to deal with.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Yes.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Would it be something to think about that we cut that budget authority back just a little bit more and say, look, you abused it, you're at 3.1, we're going to put it at 2.5 or 2.8, something like that, to make an even stronger message that we're not going to hurt any people now, they're going to be able to finish out this particular biennium, but you're going to have to pay for sins, there has to be some penance here? We cut them back and we'll look and see that first year how it goes and then we can make any adjustments the second year at some point. Would you be amenable to at least thinking about doing something along that line when the budget comes forward?

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Well, actually, we have looked at something very similar to that. It's just a little bit like you proposed. We were going to have a summer-fall study on this after the dust settles on this, so to speak, and come back and look at that in January to see if we needed to make further adjustments by next year, so it's a little reverse of what you're saying. You're