

saying cut it now and look at it. We suggested we would leave it flat because then we could look at it next year and see how they're being used, after we had a study, and see how they are using the tools that we have now, that is analyzing whether they should be permanent or temporary, if there should be some in temporary, I mean permanent status and that type of thing.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Would you...

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: And we know they'd be all right till midyear so we're not so worried about it.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Right. So would you be necessarily that opposed to reversing that a little bit, cutting it to 2.5, 2.8, somewhere in that area, and still doing the study and see what the im...see how things are going?

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: I assume that that's possible. Any cut you'd make would tend to be a little bit arbitrary because, you know, whether there's more than...that insinuates there's more than 750,000 dollars worth of abuse, quote, in there. I'm not sure there is or isn't, so any cut I think could be tend to be arbitrary right at this point. Now maybe we can study it closer in the next.... We've...this is a very short notice, if you understand it's only been about three weeks since we've known the depth of the issue, but...so there would be a risk of being somewhat arbitrary but, on the other hand, it probably isn't impossible.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: And, Senator Wehrbein, you did bring up one other question I wanted to ask. Was this situation brought to the committee or did the committee uncover the situation and ask for it to be clarified?

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Well, I'll tell you how it was. The first of February it was brought to this committee that there was...that there needed to be a deficit appropriation. We did not know until about the 1st of April, I think maybe it was March 29th or 30th, the depth of the need for that and the so-called emergency nature of it, and that we discovered ourselves upon asking questions.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: And, again, I think that points to the...to the good job on the Appropriations Committee side and Appropriations staff. Madam President, in the last few minutes