

there be any questions, I'd be glad, I'd ask that you adopt the committee amendments. I have Senator Warner standing by, I believe, to address some of the issues.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Fisher. Senator Warner.

SENATOR WARNER: Madam President, members of the Legislature, as Senator Fisher has indicated, the bill was introduced to repeal 718 as I didn't at the time have a specific solution to the problem that had been brought to my attention and that was, as Senator Fisher has indicated, some individuals who had long-term maintenance drugs found or anticipated and subsequently found significant increases in their cost and it was an attempt to, spend a lot of time. I certainly appreciate the work and assistance of the committee in trying to arrive at some relief for those people who specifically would be affected by the bill as proposed to be amended by the committee. But the general sense of the numbers that I have put together, that the cost for some of these drugs for people, and you understand this is not a cure, long-term maintenance drug by definition here will apply to a condition which is going to require some kind of maintenance drug just in order to survive reasonably comfortably, but not probably of a nature that would cure that we would think of for some prescriptions. But generally the cost has appeared to go up double or more to the individual recipient. The reason, as you will recall 718, is that insurance companies would have contracts with pharmaceutical suppliers of some kind that resulted in mail-order catalog in which they had a reduced price for the cost to the recipient of the drugs and as a way of encouraging them to use that and overall there was a reduction. LB 718 was introduced, as you recall, to kind of assist the pharmacies in the state not to have a major portion of the business shifted, but because of the circumstances that some people found themselves in, it seemed to me that the solution that is arrived at here will save them significant money. It still maintains, in a general sense, the criteria that was included in 718. As far as state pharmacists are concerned, I have heard estimates of the amount of drugs involved. It might be somewhere between 10 to 15 percent, depends on who you ask, but the cost is significant. I'm comfortable with the committee amendment. I think it will help. It may well be that some people would have difficulty in getting their 180-day prescription, but other physicians have indicated on an individual basis that they may be willing to do that. But I would hope that the body would adopt the committee amendment