

amendment.

SENATOR CROSBY: The Wickersham amendment is adopted. I will raise the call.

CLERK: Madam President, the next amendment...Senator Wickersham would move to amend Senator Robinson's amendment with AM1858. (Amendment appears on pages 1881-82 of the Legislative Journal.)

SENATOR CROSBY: Senator Wickersham, to open on your amendment.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Thank you, Madam President. Now we're to the amendment that can be described as the one where we would attempt to defend the bureaucracy that is bloated, that no longer has any purpose and is wasting money. Just so we get that clear from the start. I don't agree with those characterizations, of course, or else I wouldn't have brought the amendment. But since those kinds of things have already been said about it, I thought I might as well reiterate them so when other people get up to speak in opposition, they won't have to waste words on those kinds of arguments and we may get to the real substance. I think the real substance of the amendment which I'm offering, which incidentally is the provisions of LB 582 that I think is a more appropriate way of using weatherization funds, if that's the pot of money that we're going to do, to use for this program. Instead of using those funds as grants, what my amendment will do, my amendment to the amendment will authorize the use of those funds as loans, the same way that we currently utilize them for other projects. I think earlier it was indicated that those are 14-year loans at 0 percent interest. Now, I think there's an advantage in funding in that fashion. If we use grant dollars they're gone. Now they may have gone to a good purpose. But if we just issue a grant, the dollars are gone. If we use those funds to make low interest rate loans, we've made a contribution, or no interest rate loans, we've made a contribution, the folks who took the loans will pay them back over time, hopefully in a way that they're able to adjust into their budgets, and we will have a long-term effort in place. We will be in it for the course, we won't be in it for just a few dollars that we throw in, in terms of a grant. We'll be in it for the long-term, which I think is far more appropriate. The amendment would also remove current provisions in law which would sunset the weatherization program. And the weatherization program, if the rest of the amendment is adopted, would also of course include the