

with the discussion, I'd like to have the legislators focus their attention on the north balcony where Senator Schmitt has ten fifth and sixth graders from Sacred Heart School in Greeley with their teachers. Would you please stand and be welcomed by your Legislature. Also Senator Coordsen has 20 ninth graders from Friend Public School with their teacher, and they're in the north balcony. Would you please stand and be welcomed by your Legislature. Thank you. Senator Bernard-Stevens, on the Wickersham amendment.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Senator Crosby, members of the body. Wanted to put in a couple of points that may not have been referred to a great deal on this particular issue, and I rise in opposition to the Wickersham amendment. When I used to be a younger lass (sic) and working in Washington, one of the things that I...that we did was we had a lot of our friends that were...I'm such an old person now, Senator Schimek. Did I say "lass"? Well, the operation was a success and I'm much more comfortable now. But nonetheless, be that as it may, a lot of friends that we had worked in the agencies. And it was interesting to watch when they had monies that were given to them for particular programs, and all of a sudden the programs were not being used that much. And they understood that, you know, if they didn't do something with the monies, the monies would be taken away. And so what they would do, and I'm not exaggerating at all, they would many times say, look, we need to go to lunch and we need to figure out ways to spend the dollars, and we need to come up with new ideas so that we can continue to keep the dollars here because (a) we want to keep the money; (b) we want to keep our jobs. And one of the things I think is happening here is that we made a policy decision as a Legislature to, in 1996, sunset the Weatherization Fund. In fact, if you look at the Blue Book, it's just been recently put out on the appropriations, they've also assumed a zero funding with the assumption that it was going to be sunsetted and would not be there anymore. The fund is not particularly used a great deal, as Senator Beutler pointed out to the body. It makes sense to me that we use our prerogative as a Legislature and say, look, we had a fund that was very successful. It's not... it's done its purpose, it's finished its purpose, it's done what we wanted it to do and now it's time for the Legislature to use its prerogative and say, there's a higher priority now and the higher priority is on the education side. And I would say to Senator Beutler and to Senator Wickersham that one of the things in the process that I think is an appropriate process is that as