

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Review the contracts which would include the consultants, yes.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you. But now here is the question that I want to ask, another one. If...you said that the amount I am putting in this...in this amendment is too much, if I would lower it, might that gain your support? In my amendment?

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Actually, we didn't put the money in, so I guess whatever you put in wouldn't convince me at this point.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you. Members of the Legislature, I am pleased to know that there are others who want to look at this problem of consultants, and I want to tailgate on what Senator Wehrbein indicated. I don't think it is a bad thing in every case to hire a consultant. Sometimes it is absolutely essential to hire somebody who is a specialist in a given area, but when consultantships proliferate in the way that they have, and nobody in state government knows how many of these contracts exist, something is wrong. And I know I keep talking about Maximus, but that is the one where the greatest amount of money is spent, and there is no relationship between what we are spending and the work being done to earn it. That is why the federal government and the courts generally frown on governments using consultant fee...I meant contingent fee contracts. It is not a careful enough consideration given to the expenditure of the public's money. But aside from that, doesn't it encourage people to be lazy and slipshod when they can go out and hire somebody to do what either they were elected to do, appointed to do, or hired to do. We are not talking about consultants who volunteer their time because they care about the state and want to do something to help the people. These are individuals, companies, and corporations, very, very generously rewarded, and usually there is no accountability, nothing in terms of the standards they have to meet, and in most cases, the agency that hired them has nobody intelligent enough about what's being done to even monitor the work that they are performing, so they accept at face value what they are given, and they may not even be able to use it. With this Maximus contract, it was nice that LB 519 made them say that they will bill the state for only 9 percent instead of 12-1/2 percent. But here we have a written contract being orally altered. There is nothing signed by the state to that effect, so we have written contracts, the terms of which are not being followed, so where can a member of the