

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Senator Witek, you're recognized to open on your amendment.

SENATOR WITEK: Mr. Chairman, members of the Legislature, I too have some concerns about this area of the committee amendment. And I have some concerns about the fiscal note that talks about this area of the amendment. Their, if you look at the fiscal note, their appropriations or their approximations of the cost of this area are about half a million dollars a year to go ahead and initiate these programs, but there is language in the committee amendment and it's on page 7, line 23 and 24, and it states, "any other program deemed necessary and appropriate by the department". I understand that they have to work within the context of or confines of how much money is appropriated by the Legislature. But if we put in language as wide open as any other program deemed necessary and appropriate by the department, I guess I have concerns that it may get...we may get too much going here and not be able to afford it, as Senator Chambers says. And I think if we're going to actually be reasonable about the opportunity for an individual to go ahead and do what they call positive time, then if those individuals who want to initiate this positive time and I'm not sure that I'm one of them, but at least you should be reasonable and responsible and make sure that there's an opportunity to do so. So what my amendment would do is at the end of line 24, after "any other program deemed necessary and appropriate by the department", I insert the words "and approved by the Governor", that's so that there's some oversight as to what programs are deemed necessary and appropriate, and some individual has...and the Governor would have, I guess, some opportunity to approve or disapprove of whatever had been deemed necessary and appropriate by the department. I thought about striking that line completely out of there and only going with those areas that Senator Pedersen has outlined in his portion of the committee amendment, but I didn't want to...not knowing what programs will be necessary, I didn't want to keep them from having appropriate programs. So all I'm asking for in my amendment is to insert the word "and approved by the Governor" so that there is some oversight there with approval, asking for approval by the Governor on what programs will be necessary and appropriate by the department. So I would simply ask for people to adopt this amendment to just have a little bit of oversight on the program, and it wouldn't change anything here, it would just have an individual, the Governor accountable to those areas and the