

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, just briefly on...the amendment is not all that substantive. But I have a sense that there may be...the amendment may have come out without giving some thought to what the process currently is. Certainly it's always good to want to know what programs cost. And as a matter of fact, every agency does that every two years when they submit their budget request, so we can very easily determine what this activity is costing, what it will continue to cost and can be readily done. In addition, and I can't speak for Senator Wehrbein, I don't see him here at the moment. Maybe somebody in the Appropriations Committee can confirm if it's still done. But what we always did when I was involved, and I suspect the practice is still continued, when any new program was enacted that carried an A bill, as this did, we normally carried that as a separate budget program for at least four years in order to monitor specifically what was happening to the costs of that program, and more importantly, one of the ways that you emphasize in the Legislature, as a policy matter, how much activity should be done is the level of funding that that program is provided. And when we ran it in a separate program within the agency, limited to that bill that was passed, then that gave you...gave the agency direction as to how much activity, based on the level of appropriation that the Legislature intended to do. I'm only saying this...I believe the process currently provides for all the goals that the amendment is suggested...to me that it may well be that that would be adequate to provide every member, or any member, as well as the public, what the cost of the program is. If maybe one of the members of the Appropriations Committee on the floor could say if they recall whether or not these new programs continue as a separate program for at least a couple of years after the bills are passed. But I know that was the practice, and it was for the very purpose that Senator Witek has pointed out, so that you could monitor a new program's cost more closely. And I simply don't know if they're continuing it, but I assume that generally they are. Certainly they can do it very easily if they believe it's desirable. Bottom line is I probably won't support the amendment because I think the things that are sought here, which I certainly would agree with, I believe are available as part of the normal process.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Witek, followed by Senator Lindsay.