

amendments.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: The committee amendments are adopted. The Chair recognizes Senator Wickersham to open on the bill.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Thank you, Madam President. I'll elevate you now to your true title and responsibility. The...Senator Beutler touched on a couple of things that I also believe are important in the act, and I will be happy to discuss with Senator Beutler his concerns between now and Select File. We had worked fairly hard on this bill in order to present it to the Government Committee. I think there's merit in some of the things that Senator Beutler was raising, be happy to discuss those with him. But this is a fairly important piece of legislation for a variety of reasons, and I hope we can advance it today. The...there are a couple of what I would characterize as policy decisions made in the bill, some of the rest of it is housekeeping. Let me point out to you what I think are some of the real policy changes. One of them was touched on by Senator Beutler, that is the ability of the Governor to enter into interlocal agreements for emergency response. These would be agreements between states, much as we now have agreements between counties, or cities, or other local political subdivisions to do the same thing. Typically these agreements, and I'll say typically because all of them have some variation, allow for states to lend personnel from their jurisdictions to other states for emergency response. Typically these people have expertise and knowledge about how to deal with disasters effectively, and you may not have enough staff, for example, in your off...in your own state to handle an emergency. You may also find it possible to lend various items of equipment to another state for use in response to a disaster. Usually those agreements provide that the receiving state will reimburse the sending state for all cost, so it usually is worked out so that there's no cost to the sending state. But that's the general framework of the agreements, it simply increases every state's ability to respond to a disaster by calling upon their neighboring states for resources. Senator Beutler also touched on an important section of the bill having to do with definitions. Some of those definition changes also relate to another broader purpose in the bill, and that is to change the focus of the current provisions from the Nebraska Disaster and Civil Defense Act to the Emergency Management Act. And we just say in isolation to the Civil Defense Act that I hope conjures