

February 12, 1996 LB 1044

these huge bureaucracies. They will be preparing and recommending budgets. I hope that Senator Wehrbein or someone else from the Appropriations Committee will stand up and explain to us why that's good policy to allow administrative...an administrative group, such as this, a group completely appointed by the Governor to be making budgeting decisions of this nature, I imagine with tremendous changes, behind closed doors. I hope that they will, if not already, maybe it's not...maybe...I'm not sure who will be involved here, but I hope that they will involve someone from the Appropriations Committee and the Legislature in their meetings, especially on the budgets, on the combination of budgets, or someone from our policy offices to make sure that... I guess my concern is that we are always told that we can't get at like a university budget. We can appropriate the money, but we can't get into it and decide what's done with it. Right now each of those agencies has to come to the Appropriations Committee separately so that they can go over...

PRESIDENT ROBAK: One minute.

SENATOR WITEK: ...each one of their budgets separately and make those decisions. Now if we combine all of these big agencies it will be one, big budget. And I...maybe I'm misunderstanding here, but it looks to me like what will happen is you'll have this huge, "mega-agency" out there, this "megabureaucracy" that they will get tremendous amount of funds for this, it's over a billion dollars a year, if you look at the fiscal note. And I'm hoping that the Appropriations Committee does not lose sight of a lot of that budget and where it goes and some of those budgeting decisions. So I do have concerns, especially with Section 9 of this bill, and I hope we will go very slowly with the suggestions that are in 1044. Thank you.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Witek. Senator Bernard-Stevens.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Madam President, members of the body. Senator Wesely, while you're going to the microphone I do want to ask you, as I mentioned earlier, on page 458 of the committee amendment, Section 955, and that's the portion dealing with, part of the portion dealing with the OJS. And I think what I'd rather do is just, first of all, give you a couple of minutes, if you so desire, to expand upon what changes we're