

February 12, 1996 LB 1044

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Senator Preister, absolutely. What we are deciding today is whether or not to change the administrative alignment of the five entities into three differently configured entities. But the programs and services and everything that, the policies, the things that we have, in the past, enacted as a Legislature all continue, nothing is changed in that regard, administrative, the hierarchy is. But below that all of that remains to be looked at next year. And the idea would be that we would be involved, as the Legislature, the administration involved, the private sector, the employees, all would be brought together in the course of the next few months. And at December of next year a draft bill and a report on the rest of what needs to be done will be submitted, and then the Legislature will have to pass legislation to do anything further. So the over...we have the hammer, we have the control over the actual substantive changes in the sort of services that people receive in the state.

SENATOR PREISTER: Okay, thank you. That was what I thought you had said. But, as everyone here well knows, the devil is in the details, as they say, and those details we really don't have before us, and that is a part of my concern. I want to continue in that vein, and a little bit with what Senator Crosby said, too. And that is that there is input by the employees who are working in those areas. And I might expand that a little bit. Hopefully, there will be also some client input, because oftentimes, in addition to the employees, the people receiving the service see it from a different perspective and those people can offer some good insights in terms of providing better quality service, but in the streamlining of that service. So I believe that that input, at all levels, is extremely important. And I would, I think, go a step further in talking about the employees than Senator Crosby did and say that all too often state employees get a reputation of just being there, collecting a paycheck, but they aren't seen as people who provide a very valuable service in many areas. And that those state employees are loyal and dedicated people who oftentimes go above and beyond what's asked and expected of them in their role as service providers, particularly those in the human service area. So I think it's important to let them know that they're appreciated by asking for their input. It's also important that we take advantage of that expertise that they have developed

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