

SPEAKER WITHEM: Yeah, thank you, and I'll give some time to Senator Wesely on this. I, like Senator Maurstad, I've had a concern about the task force and as I indicated in my remarks yesterday, had three different views on the bill. One of those was to question the bill itself. Secondly, it was to support getting rid of this task force entirely. And the third, and that was the avenue I'd already drafted an amendment on anyway, was to deal with the task force itself. And I understand the concern that people in the building industry have about codes. But keep in mind, there is a reason for codes and there's a trade-off with codes. Codes exist to provide for safe, healthy housing. Occasionally, probably they can get too burdensome and too expensive. On the other hand, we all know of horror stories, and I'm not going to get into too many of them, where we don't enforce electrical codes, then houses burn down. We don't enforce venting requirements on furnaces and people die from carbon monoxide. That we don't enforce proper building codes and tornadoes come along, or high winds come down, and the buildings fall down around people and people get killed. Codes exist to protect the health and safety of the public. It's appropriate, probably, to look at those codes. My concern about the bill the way it's drafted, though, is that it'll be simply a forum for individuals wanting to put up cheaper, unsafe housing to come forward and bash codes. That was why I was sorely tempted to support the Maurstad amendment or sorely tempted not to support the bill. I think probably the more responsible position, though, is to make sure that if we're going to look at codes that we do two things. Number one, that we make sure that there is a balance on this committee. So we are first of all, or second of all, I guess the way it's drafted, we're indicating that of these...that we're expanding the committee from nine to twelve and indicating that at least one of these members shall be a local code enforcement official so that we know. One of these people will be an individual contractor that's been involved with one of these licensed trades, not one of the general contractors, but one of these people in these trades where they require licenses where you have some technical types of expertise and questions. And finally, one who actually works in the construction of housing. Secondly, that any sorts of recommendations for changes in codes have some sort of cost/benefit analysis between the amount of money saved and whether or not there's an impact or the quality of housing and the safety. And I think that's probably a better approach so