

amendment, and I'm going to rise to oppose it because I...I'm still unclear as to exactly where I'm at on this issue. But I understand targeting where Senator Beutler wants to go. On the other hand, my premise really is that the government, especially the federal government, has raised the cost of housing in many areas above the affordability of many people because of the cost of lumber. And it has to do with our logging policies and other policies that have been set at the federal level and have carried over into raising the cost of our housing stock. It's put it out of the reach of many people because of federal policy. And so it's...I'm difficult for me then to turn around and target an area and say we don't want to help many when the housing has been raised out of the availability of many people through no fault of their own. In a sense we have done that in our tax, our property tax situation. People have moved into houses that they could afford originally. Now taxes have risen to where they can't, and they're angry about that. I think they're angry also at the cost of lumber. I don't have at my fingertips how much lumber has gone up in the last few years, but it's been enormous in the last ten or fifteen years. A lot has to do with policies that some would agree...I would agree with some of them, others I would not agree with. And so it's difficult for me now to limit those that are eligible for some assistance in housing costs to whatever definition we have, the very poor or whatever. I think that threshold should be raised. I do not know where that is. And as I understand Senator Wesely's original bill, 1322, it's been established at this point. And at this point, I guess I'm comfortable with that so I'm going to oppose Senator Beutler's amendment.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator. Senator Witek.

SENATOR WITEK: Thank you very much. I haven't spoken much on this bill and it is taking an awful long time. And I've had an opportunity to follow along with the discussion and make a decision not to vote for the bill, but also to...to bring it to the attention of people on the floor that we have a lot of policies already at the federal level, we have several through the state to help with affordable housing. Again, I have to bring it to the attention of everyone on the floor that at some point we and the federal government, which I believe they're already on the right track in doing so, have to decide what our priorities will be, where our monies will go instead of just making up a policy and going and finding some funding source for