

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Witek. Senator Withem.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Yeah, I would like to comment on the cost savings aspect, and then comment specifically on this amendment. I think what...you know, on General File Senator Witek and other individuals kept trying to trap poor Senator Wesely over there into giving some sort of a cost analysis of how many dollars would be saved. And very appropriately Senator Wesely responded, and I think I chipped in with this is, we don't know how much is going to be cost. As a matter of fact, the speech I gave was that the overall cost of providing the services to individuals in our state is probably going to continue to increase. If we could, by passing this bill, keep it from increasing at a slower rate, that would be beneficial. We have an aging population. We have a federal government that seems to be cutting back on what it's sending to the state. We have more and more mandates coming down from on high, and that's the reason we have to do this bill. So I think to be critical of the sponsors of this bill and the supporters of this bill because they wouldn't come forth with a flat out dollar savings amount is inappropriate criticism. However, getting to the substance of the Witek amendment, what the Witek amendment says is that if in this planning we're asking the individuals doing the plan to, within that plan, submit how they are going to try to reduce operation costs. And I think that's an appropriate thing to ask for. I see absolutely no problem with this particular Witek amendment, and I plan on voting in favor of it, but indicating we are looking at operation costs and that's what we're trying to trim out of this overall agency, and that certainly is a goal, and I think it is appropriate that that ought to be a part of the plan. On the other hand, though, this whole question of how many dollars will be saved is not an appropriate question to be asked because we don't know what all of the variables are at this point. But I do plan on supporting this amendment.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Withem. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Madam President, members of the Legislature, this is going to be hard for me, but I'm going to rise in support of the Witek amendment. The more she talked the more I thought I wouldn't, but I think I will. I rise in support. Thank you.