

longer than necessary, just to reiterate, I think when we are talking about such significant part of our state budget affecting the number of employees that it does and the number of citizens in the state that we need to proceed with some degree of caution. I, once again, do not believe that this would be a large impediment in the process, and would merely be a prudent step to take in allowing this legislative body the opportunity to react to the details once they are provided. Once again, this merely extends the date from January 1st to March 15th and I would ask for support of the amendment.

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

SPEAKER WITHEM: Yeah, members of the body, I'm not going to support the Maurstad amendment. I will be voting no on the Maurstad amendment, and in some ways, I think that the March 14th date would be actually worse than the June 1st date or the July 1st or whatever the other amendment was, and let me explain why I think that. We all have talked time and time again on this bill about what a monumental change this is, and we're agreeing that it is. We've also talked about the fact that within the state agencies there are lots of very good people that do a very good job doing what they're doing, but they're going to be resistant to any change. These are going to be people that know the rules on food stamps frontwards and backwards. That's what they do for a living, and they are not going to necessarily want to change to have to be providers of services in a broad range area. And the concern that we had as the supporters about the delay was that once people get to the nitty-gritty in redesigning the specifics of the new agency, they are going to be...there's going to be a lot of consternation going on, and there should be. If we are going to make any real changes, there should be. And there was the fear that if those individuals knew that the Legislature was going to be able to come back next year and have all session to change, modify, repeal, put their concerns specifically into a bill, that there would not be a lot of good faith work going on over the summer. Had that happened though, at least we would have had a full session to make those adjustments. What I'm afraid we'd do if we backed this up to March 15th would be that those same individuals might be dragging their feet and trying to move their ideas here in the next Legislature, but we come into the next Legislature with precious little time in which to actually accomplish anything. March 14th is not very long in a long