

amendment, as I read it, sets up a Task Force on Unfunded Mandates. And it directs the Legislature, or the Legislature directs the Standing Committees to undertake interim studies during 1996 to identify unfunded mandates. I have...first of all, I support the thrust of the amendment. I think it's a very worthwhile activity for the Legislature to engage itself in. But I have two concerns. One of those is philosophical and the philosophical concern is it's popular in this era to criticize all unfunded mandates or any idea that a state legislature, or the federal government, for that matter, might have on how public policy could be better carried out. If we direct one of our subdivisions, and that's, keep in mind, that's what school districts and cities and counties are, they are subdivisions of the state government. Any time we direct any of those people to do anything we get criticized for a "unfunded mandate". And on occasion, it is incumbent upon the State Legislature or the state government in general to come up with the best policy for the state. And on occasion it is best to have that carried out at the local level. So, while I support the idea of looking at all unfunded mandates and trying to eliminate those that may not make sense, I don't buy into the popular culture or the popular wisdom, the political correct mode at the moment, of saying that all of those are, just by definition, improper, because there are times, I think, when it is important for the state to enact a policy for the betterment of our citizens and to require local governments to carry that out. Health regulations, as an example, weights and measures may be...well, I guess that's carried out at the state level, but there are a number of these sorts of things that it is a good idea to do. That's point number one concern about this. Point number two, and, Senator Janssen, Senator Bromm, if you would not mind, I was very quickly trying to get an amendment to your amendment until I realized it's an amendment to the amendment to the amendment, which our rules don't allow. I am concerned about statutorily the Legislature directing what its committees should do. And I think the language you now have is a direction to the committees that they are forced to conduct studies on unfunded mandates. Now for committees like the Education Committee that may not have much else to do, it's probably a welcome relief to have this directed in statute for them. For other committees, however, I think maybe it ought to be still incumbent upon the committee chair to make that determination. So I have proposed some language, I have an amendment drafted. It certainly is not one I'm going to want to take a lot of time on. If people