

year 2000, and the difference between 00 being the year 1900. It seems to me that we have more problems and issues to address with our data-gathering and computer information systems than just those...than that specific problem. And I realize we can't address all of them at once, but I hope that we will continue to address them over time. It did seem sensible to me, however, to have some flexibility built into the process of addressing the millennium issue and that if...if the consultants and the people who are knowledgeable came to us and said, you can do this and avoid...and fix your problem with the millennium and, at the same time, you can achieve other benefits in your system, and it isn't going to cost you more money, and we'll do it for you, my response would instantly be, do it. I was concerned that the legislation we had offered to us, without this amendment, would not have allowed that kind of flexibility. I think that the amendment that is being proposed now will provide that kind of flexibility. I understand the need, as Senator Wehrbein says, to remain focused on our objective, and to not allow this effort to spin out of control. But it does have to have a certain amount of flexibility so that we can make the reasonable decisions when we have the opportunity to do that. So I hope and expect that the amendment will be adopted. I think it is a necessary project in the long term, and even though it sounds like a lot of money to spend on something that is arcane and silly and should have never come up, the fact of the matter is I think we're there and it is going to take money to solve the problem.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Wickersham. Senator Brown.

SENATOR BROWN: Mr. President, members of the body, I support this amendment. I believe that it gives us the most latitude in finding a solution, but also keeps us focused on the century date change problem. I think many of the members of the body were shocked at the figures that came forward in this...in this bill, and I think the committee was initially, too. And I want to have all of you be assured that the committee will, when the amendment is adopted that provides greater oversight by the Appropriations Committee, I think the committee will be very vigilant in watching this whole process. I think Senator Lynch, because of his interest in 309, is certainly going to be vigilant that we do not allow this effort to spend more than it legitimately needs to spend; Senator Wehrbein, because he's just very frugal; but I also will be approaching it in somewhat the