

sure and see. I haven't heard it's...I see that from Senator Wehrbein's comments that the money did go into the...some of the...into the pay equity. The important thing is, though, a 5 percent increase, over 2,000 workers and the amount of money that we're looking at, is so small that I'm saying maybe we need to look at making sure that the services will be there. And they didn't implement the plan that was supposed to be to provide more services, but it's my understanding right now they have initiated that. One of the other big questions are the department come in and said that they didn't plan on doing this this year because they were looking at what federal funds. The Appropriations Committee, as I understand, had said and are taking into consideration that all the federal dollars that are coming will come and be there. If that's the case, they're betting on that, those federal dollars coming. Maybe we should hedge a little bit. I don't think all those federal dollars will be here by the end of the year, so let's look at that. This is the difference. The agency come in and stated that they didn't consider all the dollars being there, in terms of federal dollars. If you go with this, you're going with the idea that all the federal dollars will be there, and I guess I look at what's coming down the pipe and consider that those dollars aren't going to be there so maybe we better have a little bit of a hedge, a cushion, and potentially have some dollars there to provide the services. It's not a situation that I don't believe in the pay equity. I strongly believe that it needs to be done and we need a process, but let's do it in a manner and a fashion that people can go home and feel that they receive something. This is such a small amount right now, let's get the process changed and realistically look at what potential federal dollars will be coming in. Thank you.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Avery. Senator Lynch.

SENATOR LYNCH: Lieutenant Governor Robak and members, I stand to oppose this amendment as well. Enough people have talked already, but I thought I'd throw another two or three cents worth in. This is something that's been too long overdue. Maybe this year isn't the right year, but I know that we also had "maybe this isn't the right year" for the last ten years. We've got programs out there that are provided by the local regional programs and programs that are provided by private providers as well. What we're talking about here as a pay equity issue involves not just the local programs run by regions