

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Yes, Madam Speaker, members, I rise to oppose Senator Chambers' amendment. We have discussed this quite extensively on General File. I think that we need to at least do the minimum that we're doing in the 200 beds. We have a rising population. I can't disagree with many of the things that Senator Chambers is saying and I would certainly be willing to work with him. In fact, I have a commitment to myself this summer to look at some alternatives as well as some ways that perhaps we can continue...try to find more jobs, more opportunities across the state to get at some of the things he's talking about. There's certainly...it's certainly correct that there are inequities that are there and I think that we all should be cognizant of that. But, on the other hand, I think at the present stage that we're at we need as much as we can possibly do at this stage. I've tried to make the case for what I think we're going to have to do next year, since obviously we're not going to do it this year, in terms of increasing incarceration in many cases. Hopefully, that's not the answer in all cases, that we can continue to find some ways to avoid that. But the situation as I see it today, I think we need to continue on the path we are until we have some other logical method that we can substitute or use as alternatives and so, at this point, I rise to oppose Senator Chambers' amendment.

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

SENATOR MAURSTAD: Thank you, Madam President. I rise in support of the Chambers' amendment. Obviously, this was discussed on General File on a couple of amendments that I brought forth. My preference, of course, from the beginning was to not build any modular. That has been rejected. The Legislature did choose to only do two instead of the three that were asked for. Obviously, if we can reduce that by one, that's closer to what I hoped...hope to gain. I, once again, passed out some of the testimony before the Appropriations Committee by Director Clarke. I think he was, as I indicated before, very candid. I think we do have a very viable security concern here which, in the short term, might cost us...might save us some money relative to the alternative of building a prison, but in the long run might, in fact, cost us a lot more in that with the cost of savings we might, in fact, be buying additional lawsuits and/or worse, have individuals personally injured or harmed because of this decision. The other point that I tried to make