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And for reasons that Senator Wickersham, I'm sure, will explain, that was the original provision of the bill, and what this amendment would do would say that, beginning July 1 of the year 2001, the language that they shall conduct the review and the audit would be instate...inserted into the bill and so the requirement to audit would be picked up again in that year when, hopefully, the financial situation for the Auditor has been straightened around. I didn't want to see the audit function in any way diluted or rescinded. I think it serves a useful purpose and will...and can continue to serve a useful purpose, but we need to restore the whole system to financial and procedural dimensions that allow it to operate successfully. Right now, it cannot, but that's the point of the amendment--to restore the obligation of the Auditor to audit in the year 2001. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator. Chair recognizes Senator Wickersham.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Thank you, Mr. President. The amendment that Senator Beutler is offering, as he indicates, affects the audit process in the State Auditor's Office. What is provided for in the bill is a discretionary function on the part of the State Auditor to, within 30 days after the filing of the budget, check that budget for errors in mathematics, improper accounting, and other items of noncompliance with the Nebraska Budget Act or the spending limitations. Now that, as I say, is currently discretionary. Senator Beutler's amendment makes it mandatory in the year 2001 and then that would...on July 1 of 2001, and then that would also dovetail with other requirements on the Auditor's Office requiring them to report their findings to the local government, so that the local government could make changes through a system that is otherwise provided in the body...or in the bill. The original objection of the Auditor's Office was that imposing those requirements before they made other structural changes in their office would require the hiring of a considerable amount of temporary help, because a 30-day window is not a very long period of time to examine a large number of documents. And if your only choice is to hire a lot of people to do something very quickly, that's expensive. That's the reason the bill or the amendment that was adopted was changed and that became a discretionary function. Senator