

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

April 9, 1999

LB 432A

other...other agencies that happening? Think we probably have more problems with it going (laugh) up rather than down. But I guess, you know, when an agency is cut so much that it really causes them not to function, as I understand is what has happened over there, you know, what kind...what safeguards can you, as the Appropriations Committee, do with this, Senator Pederson?

SENATOR D. PEDERSON: Thank you for the question, Senator Hartnett. It...this is a constitutional office that we're talking about. The people who are in charge of that office come to the Appropriations Committee and they make an annual request, or for a biennial request, for what it's going to take to operate that office. We have tried hard not to micromanage people's offices. We have tried to view what they say they need for that office with all seriousness. Then when they make that request, we see to it that the appropriate funding is made for that. Now in this particular situation, it's really an interesting situation because we kept seeing these cuts that were taking place in the office of the Auditor, and you would think, if that's the situation, they didn't need the money. If they needed the money, you would have thought they would have come to us with it. Then...then we get a new Auditor that comes in and says there's not enough money in this office to fulfill the responsibilities of the office. But, candidly, our new Auditor has not been on the job all that length of time to analyze what the needs are, and that's why we felt the appropriate thing to do was to not just say, okay, whatever you need, we'll give it to you. We said let's give you X amount of dollars to start operating this office in a fiscally prudent manner. There are several functions that the auditor does, one of which is to go out and do school audits and things of that nature. That's an optional thing where, essentially, they compete with other private auditors in order to accomplish and I don't know that that's really a necessary function of that office to go out and to audit these schools. So I think that's an...that's an optional thing. I don't know that we want to just say here is all of the money you need, go out and do your job. I think we want the auditor to assess what it is truly that the Auditor's Office needs to accomplish and what's the minimal amount of money that it will take to accomplish that. If that assessment is made and we determine that there isn't