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LB 179

definition of "disabled" for purposes of qualifying. And that particular part was estimated to cost about \$1.7 million. This amendment does not touch that section. So what's left in is the expanded definition of "disability" and the increased qualifying...increased income qualifying amounts, and the other two portions are stricken and hopefully you will see some advantage to getting this to a scale that everybody would think would be workable within our budget. So I'll leave it at that and invite your questions or comments. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Beutler. Senator Preister, on the Wehrbein amendment to LB 179. Senator Preister.

SENATOR PREISTER: Thank you, Honorable President. I rise in support of the amendment. I obviously have some reluctance, but I have been visiting with Senator Wehrbein. Senator Wehrbein and the Appropriations Committee is certainly concerned about the budget and the cost of what we are doing with the homestead exemption. That issue was raised on General File when we debated the bill. At that time Senator Wehrbein had discussed the amount of money, as did Senator Beutler, and what would be...monies that would be available for other programs, also very needy programs. Somewhat of a compromise in addressing those other budgetary issues and concerns, Senator Wehrbein came up with this amendment. It does allow no change in the bill dealing with the increased income amounts, that was my intention initially with LB 179. It also leaves intact the expanded definition of disability that was Senator Chris Peterson's legislation. The amendment does deal with the valuation on the property and changes to that. It does almost cut the fiscal note in half. As Senator Wehrbein or, I'm sorry, Senator Beutler said, it would cut about \$3.7 million out of the A bill for LB 179 and allow those monies to be used in other very important social programs that I think we're all concerned about, many of which we have already advanced, and will have to, at one point or another, come to some grips with. This I see as a compromise. It allows us to expand the homestead exemption. It will allow us to provide for the increase in income eligibility for those elderly veterans and disabled who are most in need, and at the same time not overly extend the budget in doing so. So, with that, I rise in support of the amendment and