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LB 881

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Mr. President and members of the body, I am going to oppose Senator Beutler's amendment and I know that this discussion may sound a little peculiar to you because on previous occasions I've stood up and argued for full funding of TEEOSA and, in fact, I've sponsored amendments that tried to make clear that we had a commitment to full funding of TEEOSA, but because we have made the commitment to fully fund TEEOSA, I don't think that we need Senator Beutler's amendment. Now I think that we have in the bill set aside \$35 million of the cash reserve, if it's needed, to fully fund the dime drop and to fully fund TEEOSA in that respect. I think in other respects, we do not need to make additional commitments, either by intent or in fact. I do have some difficulty reading and understanding Senator Beutler's amendment because it says; all necessary dollars shall be transferred from the Cash Reserve to the General Fund for the purpose of fully funding the Tax Equity and Educational Support...Opportunities Support Act. At the moment we have no way of knowing what those "necessary dollars" would be, but because of the way that the bill is drafted or the amendment is drafted, I am sorry, it would be dependent on what we did with the biennial budget in that year. And, Senator Beutler, I'm trying to...I'm speaking slowly because I'm trying to think as I'm talking. What I think would happen under your amendment is that TEEOSA aid would be certified by February 1st. We would be in the process of adopting a biennial budget, and if the Appropriations Committee made a conscious decision to underfund TEEOSA in the budget, that is, against the certified amount on February 1st, then your language would become operative to give the Appropriations Committee guidance so that they would then put in a bill or a bill would be drafted or, I guess you can't do it as part of the appropriations bill, to transfer any other monies that were necessary from the cash reserve to fund the deficit in TEEOSA that would have been created by the Appropriations Committee in its process. I'm...I'm not sure that we wish to state our intent or to even give any impression that we do not believe that TEEOSA should be funded out of General Fund dollars because, again, the issue is whether or not you want to ever attempt to fund an ongoing program out of cash reserves, and if the impression is that we're doing that, then I think we should avoid that. Again, this is a little bit of a difficult discussion for me because I