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the Master Teacher Program, and I have great respect for those people and I think we should have started, as the majority of other states have, this program this year. But because of concerns over the budget and concerns over where we stand at this point in the session, I offer this amendment which will essentially take away the funding for the Master Teacher Program this year. It will leave the loan forgiveness program. I believe we...it is imperative that we begin to do those things that help recruit quality teachers, recruit teachers to those specific areas that, as a state, we are experiencing shortages in, so we will leave the loan program. But for this year, in a spirit of cooperation with the budget issues, withdraw the funding for the Master Teacher Program. And with that, I'd be happy to answer any questions or comments if you wish, and I urge you to support the amendment.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Raikes.

SENATOR RAIKES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members. I have a question for Senator Thompson. What exactly does it mean to have something in the...in the law, I guess, without any funding? What...what...where does that get us?

SENATOR THOMPSON: Well, that gets us through the process that we have come through with hearings and discussion and, basically, says if we, when we fund the program, this is what it will look like. It will, I hope, be part next year of the...

SENATOR RAIKES: But wouldn't it make more sense to at the time you're funding the program to decide exactly what the program is going to look like, rather than try to anticipate here when you're really not ready to make a commitment to the funds?

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: (Gavel) Members, could I please have your attention so we can hear the speakers and the debate. Thank you.

SENATOR THOMPSON: I think it shows to the people that we worked with on this, who I know are disappointed by this motion today, and to those teachers who are considering and teachers who are already at the level of national certification, that we've made a commitment to at least have the program design in statute, and