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SENATOR ENGEL: Senator Beutler, you're recognized to open.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Engel, members of the Legislature, there may or may not be much support for this. I don't know. But it doesn't matter to me because I want to do this because I have not heard an argument why we cannot do it. I have not heard an argument why we should stiff-arm the union people who have worked in good faith on this matter. And I'm beginning to wonder if this isn't all part of a larger thing I've been observing. It started when Kate Witek, our Auditor, came before the Appropriations Committee a couple of years ago. And she said, quietly and privately to us, you know the former Auditor destroyed that office. He fired people. Our salaries are way, way below. We can't hire people. We're losing our good people. Kate Witek, who never voted for a revenue increase bill in her... I think in her whole time in the Legislature, certainly she was nearly the most conservative of us, came into the Appropriations Committee, when she had to run the office, and said that was wrong, wrong, wrong what the previous auditor did, ruining salaries like that, destroying the office. And so she has been trying to build it back up. And, of course, these crazy liberals on the Appropriations Committee, like myself, you know we kind of vote to help it all out. Now the Governor is coming in with this 10 percent slash across the board, cutting five of ten auditors, will require the firing of five of ten auditors from the Auditor's Office. So, once again, in the name of whatever, this radical thought pervades and we slash and cut the workforces until they don't work for us any more. And then good people have to come around, fix it back up, and I'm not just talking about myself. I'm talking about Roger Wehrbein, who is a good person, and a lot of other Republicans and conservatives in here, who are good people who look to the balancing of things, but John Breslow just ruined that office. So what's the next thing I see in the Appropriations Committee? Our newly-elected Attorney General, Jon Bruning, sent a note to the Appropriations Committee, he wanted to adjust the previous Attorney General's budget request. You know what he did? He requested an additional million dollars from the Appropriations Committee and the Legislature. In this year, our worst year in the history of the state, he came in with a 25 percent increase in his budget; over a million dollars for new staff attorneys,