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FLOOR DEBATE

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department came back with is what is contained in the committee amendments. The committee amendment replaces the 14...34.3 hundred and...\$34,380,203 amount with \$6,800,484, and adds an emergency clause. The Department of Labor decided at this point in time to target just one major unemployment insurance project and to leave the rest of the money in the trust account for future payments for benefits. The project involves a complete update of the Benefits Payment System, which is a computer system that supports all the major business function of our unemployment payments program. And I will discuss further the amendment in detail on the opening on the amendment. With that, again, it's a procedural matter that the Legislature is taking care of for the Department of Labor, and is an appropriation of federal funds for our unemployment system, and I would ask for your support in advancement of this bill.

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN: Thank you, Senator Vrtiska. Chair would recognize Senator Vrtiska to open on the committee amendments.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Mr. President. Members, the committee amendment would delete the \$34,380,203 and replace it with \$6,800,484. This is the amount requested by the Department of Labor for the computer update, which is called the Benefits Payment System project that they would like to start working on immediately. For that reason, the committee amendment also contains an emergency clause. The department decided to choose one priority project and leave the rest of the federal Reed Act money in an unemployment insurance trust fund. They thought this would be the proper thing to do at this point because of the consistent rising costs of benefits. And I would ask for your support of this amendment.

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN: Thank you, Senator Vrtiska.

SENATOR VRTISKA: And I'd be willing to answer any questions that anybody might have in regard to this matter.

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN: Thank you, Senator Vrtiska. Chair would recognize Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Lieutenant Governor, Senator Vrtiska, when