

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

May 13, 2003

LB 407

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR FRIEND: If we can't do that and if we can't, as a body, look at things like Senator Erdman proposed here, look at opportunities, like the thing...like the amendment that Senator Erdman proposed, then I would submit to you that we probably never will be able to look at these things. I return the rest of my time to the Chair. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Friend. Senator Stuhr, followed by Senator Redfield, Combs, Wehrbein, Vrtiska, and others.

SENATOR STUHR: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. I would like to also thank Senator Erdman for his work. I think it's probably the most in-depth work, as has been said before on the floor, of any senator that has not served on the Appropriations Committee, so I do thank him and others for bringing and maintaining this discussion. Also, I want to thank Senator Wehrbein and the Appropriations Committee. They have been thanked before but, again, I don't think any of us realize, unless we serve on that committee, really how grueling it is. And they have studied the issues. I think sometimes that we could compare the Appropriations Committee and the members of the Legislature to the members of the Legislature and the public in the fact that the Appropriations Committee has studied the issues more in-depth than some of us in the Legislature. Also, the public sometimes doesn't understand the difficulty we have in looking at the budget and trying to find that balance, and I think that is much of the dilemma. This is a balancing act. We've talked about revenue. We've talked about appropriations. Where do we all come together? The public assistance programs, we've talked about those. Those are certainly the fastest growing area, somewhere I read about 30 percent a year. We won't be able to make those changes in the short time that we have left, but I think it's something that we must continually be aware of. I'm also thinking that the committees, all of us that serve on the various committees, that serve as Chair of the committees, really have a great responsibility in this whole process of looking at the budget and trying to find some