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LB 264

(Laugh) I want to affirm one thing in this bill that, in my opinion, is not just feel-good, it's very real, and it's a report. And some people think, well, that's easy and that doesn't mean anything, but it means a whole lot and I tell you that from my perspective as Chair of the Performance Audit Committee and the recent experience we had trying to audit DHH with regard to Medicaid payments. And the fact of the matter is, in many areas, they do not have adequate records, and that's a problem in two respects. The first respect is it makes it hopeless for the Performance Audit Committee to go in there and try to figure out whether they're doing a good job if they have no basic reports put together over time as to what's happening in a particular area of their endeavor. So, from the point of view of developing a really first-class Performance Audit Unit in this Legislature, it's not only a matter of putting additional resources into that which we're doing, and preparing for the day when term limits comes and you really need a tool that's ready to go and can work for you instantly in that regard. The other thing that has to happen is that we have to encourage good management in all the agencies, and good management means they have information tools. I don't know why it is, but maybe it's because of the lack of incentives and the profit motive, but government agencies do not keep and do not have the proper management tools in many cases. It's information. Information is what saves you money. It's what tells you whether you're on the right track or the wrong track, and it's not just haphazard information, but it's carefully constructed, related information that tells you how one part of your system is working with another. And perhaps the part of this bill that may have been troublesome to people was the last section, having to do with the report that required very explicit information about a number of things. It was a lot of verbiage, but it had to be in order to pinpoint exactly what it was. And, Senator Jensen, I commend you. I don't know if you came up with that language or Gwen did, but it's very precise. So, for those two reasons--to help out your own performance audit function in this Legislature and to reassure us that our departments are producing proper management information for themselves as well as for us--I would recommend this bill to you highly. Thank you.