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LB 588

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature, I'm opposed to Senator Smith's amendment here, AM0942. But I'm not opposed to half of...I'm not opposed to one of the two ideas that Senator Smith had in his amendment. And to show the good faith on that, there is subsequently filed an amendment that adopts, essentially, half of his amendment, one of the two ideas. The idea that is probably good for us, and I appreciate Senator Smith giving us a push, that is the idea that we should aspire to attain and conduct ourselves in a technical sense in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. We do that, but we don't do it with all of the peripheral kinds of safeguards that are necessary in order to technically be able to say you do it in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. That is, for example, we have not had yet, because of cost considerations for our new Performance Audit Committee, we have not yet gone through that outside peer review. A little sheet was passed out to you, describing how that works. And once we begin that process, which we've already begun, and once this outside group from the national organization comes in and looks at work that has been purported to have been done in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards, and gives their stamp of approval, then, in a technical sense, everything we do will be in accordance with these standards. We already have adopted several parts of those standards, and operate in accordance with them. So what Senator Smith's amendment does in that regard is to simply encourage us to move faster, to ensure that we're moving right away, essentially, to go through this peer review process and get properly certified so that we can say that we're doing things in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. So that part, I think, is good. The part that is not good, from my perspective, with regard to Senator Smith's amendment, is indicating that we cannot do a performance audit with regard to the Department of Revenue using the committee and our standards and what we're doing right now. That is, he's putting a limitation on that would say, you can't do any more audits with regard to the Department of Revenue unless and until this two-year period has passed and technically we come into conformance. Will that make a practical difference? I don't know. None of you have put in