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SENATOR CUDABACK: Open for discussion. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature, the budget is going to be around next week, the session is moving on, we're coming to the point in time where we're going to be amending bills into other bills. And Senator Mines and myself have asked permission from Senator Erdman to attach a bill to this bill, that has been worked on for a considerable length of time by counsel to the Banking Committee and by the sponsors and by the large insurance companies. And this bill we call, for lack of a better short name, a coordination of benefits bill. It all goes back to the work of the Performance Audit Committee last year, when we went in and looked at the Medicaid billings. You all are aware that we take care of a great number of people in our institutions, and some of those people have insurance coverage, and the state goes back and requests of those providers, of the insurance companies, money to cover the services that are rendered by the state. But what we discovered is that there is a huge problem, in terms of the response of some insurance companies for information. And I want to emphasize that it's the response of some insurance companies, not all insurance companies, by any means. However, even making that distinction, we have built into our budget an assumption that this bill will pass, and that the state will be saving in the area of \$3 million over the next two years. That's how important this area is. Health and Human Services is reporting that they are simply having trouble getting insurance companies to respond to them, and in our performance audit, that seemed to be true. It also seemed to be true that Health and Human Services had some problems of its own. But we've moved to try to make progress in all of these different areas. And in terms of getting greater cooperation from the insurance companies, we started working with the insurance companies on what's called a coordination of benefits bill, provisions that give closer direction with respect to what is expected of insurance companies, when requests of information are made. So what the bill would provide I will set out shortly. I wanted to just briefly give you an introduction to the idea, and Senator Mines has his light on and he can tell you his perspective on it. But let me say this: The two largest insurance companies,