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FLOOR DEBATE

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SENATOR CUDABACK: The motion was successful. Debate does cease. Senator Beutler, you're recognized to close on AM2787.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature, this amendment is putting the bill in the very best form it can be in, and so I would hope that you would all be in favor of doing that. If it's adopted, it will be a part of the committee amendment, and you'll have a chance to discuss again as part of the committee amendment, so there should be an opportunity for further discussion of it. Let me say, just in response quickly to a couple of items that came up, Senator Pederson, with regard to the \$13 million, that was the cost before you subtracted out the revenues that come in to the court that are also taken up by the state. So when you subtract the revenues that come in from the cost, the net cost is \$8.5 million, and it has always been that amount or lower. Actually, our \$8.5 million is slightly higher than the original total cost. With regard to spreading the cost over 12 years, I think that's just the reasonable thing to do. Now after the January debate, when I talked to a great many of you, you said that's a lot of cost in one year, especially when we have a lot of other things going on. And so I said I'll spread them out, if that's what you would like to do, and it's kind of a situation, it appears, where you're damned if you do and damned if you don't. But surely this is the better solution, in terms of everything that has happened this session and everything we need to do. But I remind you again, if you can't do things like this now and spread the cost out, what hope does government have of ever (laugh) being efficient? I mean, we don't do very many things each year in this Legislature that actually can have the long-term impact of allowing a merger of functions and the adoption...the maximum adoption of efficient technologies, such as e-mailing and electronic filing systems. Many of our places are too small for the electronic technologies. If you can put them together, then both are benefited by being able to adopt these technologies. You can argue that management out there is good now; in many places it is good, and I don't want to get into the discussion of badmouthing or saying that this system is terrible. It's not. But it's not good, either. I mean, we've had things happen; for example, the passport fee situation. If that system