

words, he doesn't even have the option anymore. If we left that as "may", then he at least would have the option of going up to the 95,000 pounds from the 81,000 pounds that we've got now. My suggestion to the body would be that on the last page of the amendments you look, your committee amendments you look at line 19 in there and you leave it at "may". That way the Director has the option to go to the 95,000 pounds if he wants to, but he doesn't, at least he doesn't have to. I think you'll find that a Mickey Finn is being passed to you.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Wesely. Senator Wesely, did you wish to talk on this?

SENATOR WESELY: Speaker Nichol, members of the Legislature. I share Senator Goodrich's concerns. I have written to Ray Barnhardt, Federal Highway Administration, to try and understand whether or not 726 is legislation that would, in fact, bring us out of compliance with federal statutes in terms of weight limits for our federal highway system. I think many of us have expressed concern about the fact that we do have to watch the weight limits that we have on our highways. The damage that they do to our roads in terms of these heavy weights is clear. I think the evidence has been forthcoming in different studies over the years and I'm not sure that LB 726 is a good policy. I think that the federal government has obviously increased some weight limits and has done so to gain some advantages. I think they upped the federal tax on trucks in exchange for this higher weight limit. I remember that a couple of years ago. I believe it would be far more advantageous for us to try to recognize our own state interest which is not to have high weight limits on our highways and our interstates and, in fact, to try to keep our limits as low as possible without being out of compliance with these federal guidelines. And so, I guess I'm going to vote against LB 726 and I'd ask all of you to consider whether or not this is good legislation or not, as well. I haven't had a chance to talk to Senator Withem about that and I apologize because I'm not sure what would be accomplished with this legislation that we'd have to have this session. But nevertheless before we'd start to increase those weight limits on our interstate and highways,