

and that these individuals that take upon themselves the speaking out on these issues, and thus jeopardizing themselves personally, are not to be harmed as a result of their courage. I think we have to encourage more of that, as a matter of fact. If you look at the national government, and the money saved from the whistle-blowing operations there, you can see that this is a tax saving effort. If you have whistle-blowers and they are going to come forward and talk about waste and abuse, that is going to be a savings to the public. I think it is also going to keep agencies a little more honest in terms of how they expend funds, and also how they operate in carrying out the law. So this is...there is the public giving it a chance to find out more about what is happening in state government, to give the public a better chance to know if there are any problems existing so that the people that know what is happening in state government aren't afraid to speak out. That is really the key. How do any of us, even as members of the Legislature, really know what is happening out there? We get reports, we get information, but do we really know if things are happening as they are supposed to. The people that really know are the ones that are actually carrying out the programs, the ones that are doing the work, see it day in and day out and they have consciences. Those consciences are some times harmed and hurt by some of the activities going on and they wish to speak out, but they fear speaking out and so they have come to me. I'm sure they've come to almost everybody in the Legislature from time to time to say what they are concerned about. But even at that time when they come to us, they are very fearful and sometimes don't ask us to do anything because they are afraid that it will get back that they actually were the ones that spoke out. So, as a result, we are sometimes tied up and unable to act on obvious problems. So this would allow them the protection they need to speak out and the protection they need so that we can act on these problems and save some money for the taxpayers and make sure our laws are carried out as they should be. It is good public policy and I'd ask your support for the bill.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Beutler's light came on. Senator Beutler, they would like to have had that their closing, but I didn't announce it, so if you'd like to speak, you may.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, as Senator Landis and Senator Wesely well know, I have