

amendment. Now what we're doing is changing that weatherization program which we have had in effect since 1981 and going from a grant program to a loan program. This will still be a very effective, efficient way to help our public schools weatherize their school buildings, but instead of just giving them the money, eventually the money will be paid back over a period of time. Again, we're recognizing the budget situation we're in. We're not in any financial shape to be giving away money, but at the same time we can help those local schools by giving them no interest loans, sending it back to the schools. They take the money and they weatherize their building. They save so much money a year in energy costs. They pay us back with half of their savings every year and we get our money back and they save money so everybody wins. The schools have a reduced energy budget so they save money and we get our money back and save money for the taxpayers of the state by weatherizing the public school buildings. This is a major change in the way the program is being handled, but it is a very positive change I think for both the state's perspective and the schools'. So that is what we're trying to do. I have asked that a handout be sent around to explain it. I don't know if it has gotten around to you, but that's really what we're talking about. The program will essentially say the same otherwise. The Energy Office will manage it and the only difference is instead of grants it will be loans. We have talked to the schools and they can see that this is a needed change and they support it and we've talked to Senator Remmers who had objections to the bill and I hope he will talk about his support for it. We think this kind of meets the different concerns that have been out there and everybody should come out of it better, so I ask your support for the motion to return and amend the bill.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Remmers.

SENATOR REMMERS: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I rise to support these amendments. I imagine by now most of you know that I was opposed to the original legislation, not because I was opposed to weatherization, I think the weatherization intent was very good. I have traditionally been opposed to grants because in my mind open grants, those that have done their work like they should do not benefit and those that haven't done what they should get the grants. I think the amendments that Senator Wesely had proposed here