

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Wesely, then Senator Hoagland.

SENATOR WESELY: Mr. Speaker, members, I'll be brief. I would just like to rise in support of the amendment and feel that it is important that we do what is right for all three of these commissions. If we're going to put money back in for the women's commission, as Senator Chambers has said, it's only right that we also look out for the Mexican-American and the Indian interests as well. Those are the people that probably have the most difficult time of all in terms of trying to organize and develop some political strength and as a result some of us must try and help in promoting their efforts and their causes and in doing the best we can to help that effort without recognizing the fact that they don't have a well organized effort outside and Senator Landis referred to that and I respect his judgement and Senator Warner's. But I met with some representatives and leaders of the Indian community back in August and September immediately after the cuts were adopted in June and we sat down and we met and we talked. We tried to get things going, but they were very discouraged. They felt as though they had lost the battle and that coming back now would be extra difficult and so they just weren't able, I think, to get that pulled together and because of that I don't think that should be a reason to vote against this effort. In fact, it's probably a reason we should make an extra effort to help them. They aren't well organized. They don't have great political strength. They don't have great numbers in this state. They are a small minority in terms of the larger population and that's reflected in their political clout down here and that means some of us need to recognize that and compensate for it and that's why we had commissions in the first place and why we ought to reestablish those because those people need that voice, need that outlet, need that focus for them to be effective in terms of carrying their agendas forward. And so because of that, I do support the amendment. I recognize it is an increase in the budget slightly, but at the same time there is much larger increases pending that are probably going to be adopted and I understand Senator Warner's concern. At some point we need to sit down and evaluate. We can't keep adding to the budget, no doubt about it, but in this particular case it appears to me that the cause is just and that we ought to support the effort and not feel that because they're not out in the lobby and we haven't gotten lots of calls and letters that they don't