

through that gate. We'll have state aid for schools go through that gate. We'll have additional help to the mentally retarded and handicapped go through that gate, and so on and so forth, and so on. I can guarantee you that every measure that I just mentioned is going to be considered today. They are all going to be considered during the day and I would expect this Legislature to vote each measure as this Legislature deems appropriate. I would hope that this Legislature would not decide against a meritorious amendment, such as this one, simply because there is a fear that this amendment opens the gate and allows other issues to be considered. Other issues will be considered. How one votes on those other issues is totally dependent on where one sits and how one believes. This amendment is a very peculiar amendment. This is the only significant budget increase amendment that I have supported. The reason I'm supporting it is I believe in my heart, and I know factually, that if we permit an erosion of the budget for the Department of Revenue, if we permit a loss of auditors and field service personnel and travel money for the conduct of the audits, we will have reduced tax collections. That is just...that is the gospel truth. We will have reduced tax collections. At a time as economically troubling as this one is, when the state has to count its pennies so carefully in terms of the dollars that are coming into the till, it is incredibly important that we maintain our current collection effort, that we not permit reduced collection efforts. The reduction of collection efforts will mean, in the last analysis, reduction in revenues. I think Senator Labeledz called this to your attention this morning. I will reiterate it. The letter that Commissioner Karnes sent out just yesterday on the unusual October receipts in and of itself is a tribute to the kind of auditing and field service activity that currently goes on with the Department of Revenue. We would not have those increased receipts in October but for some very aggressive auditing practices that currently are working. If we reduce the budget of the Department of Revenue by three percent we lop off auditors, field service personnel and frankly we simply won't see that kind of enhanced revenue that we saw in October. Again, to use the cliché, penny-wise and pound-foolish. The right thing to do is for us to keep an open mind, open the gate to this amendment, as people want, close the gate to other matters that come before us. But I would not be reluctant to vote for this amendment out of fear that this will be the gate