

pressed to look at the next biennium budget or this next time period when we're looking at a major shortfall in revenue if...to cover what we have on Medicaid expenses, we would have a major...this is going to be very difficult economic times and the possibility exists that we will hit that Cash Reserve Fund over this period of time hard. Hopefully, we will not but there is the potential because of the economic time period. If there is only a \$12 million cushion and we already know that at one on any given day you could do \$10 million hit, that's a \$2 million possible cushion. We're getting very, very dangerously low on whether or not we can maintain a balanced budget or maintain what we need by constitutional mandate. And I think though, yes, the money technically is there. The broader picture is how big of risk is this body willing to take? How much are you going to gamble? How are you going to throw the dice and hope that it comes up 11? That's the question that we need to come up with. And please remember, the previous votes taken on the Athletic Commission, that bill, in itself, was not a significant bill. However, if we can't come to an agreement on cutting the budget of \$25,000...

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: ...in a very questionable organiz...a commission, how are we going to begin cutting the budget when we have to look at a 75 to a \$150 million shortfall for the biennium? Very serious questions. Very serious problems. Very little room for maneuvering if we begin taking the funds from the Cash Fund to get us down to 12 million. I urge the body to look at the broad picture very carefully and ask themselves how much are they willing to gamble on the economic stability of state government over the next couple of years. Thank you.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Bernard-Stevens. Anyone else wishing to address the Wickersham amendment? Seeing no one, Senator Wickersham, do you wish to close?

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Just very briefly and I want to finish up with some additional remarks about how careful we would be if this \$5 million is appropriated, and Senator Beutler raised the curtain on that question and started to delineate for you the kinds of conditions that would have to be present or the considerations that would have to be met before this money was ever spent. And really we are in a chicken and egg kind of situation. You go through that whole list of factors, you spend