

item shall be effective unless overridden by a vote of three-fifths of all the members of each house of the General Assembly within ten days after action of the governor.

THE CHAIRMAN: Amendment No. 2 has been submitted by Delegate Hanson, and it is seconded by a number of the other sponsors.

The Chair recognizes Delegate Hanson to speak to the amendment.

DELEGATE HANSON: Mr. Chairman, this amendment, if adopted by this committee and ultimately by the Convention, would bring Maryland's budgetary process in line with modern state practices, and in line with modern fiscal authority. It would increase the power of the legislature in the budgetary process.

Let me first explain why I believe it is important that it be adopted, and secondly, describe what specifically it would do.

Many people tend to consider budgeting as primarily an exercise in finance, and it is indeed an exercise in finance, but budgeting more than any other area, more than any other single thing that comes before a legislative body, is the pre-eminent statement of public policy in a state. The budget more than any act or any group of acts passed by the General Assembly determines the priorities which will be laid down for the conduct of the business of the state.

Going back into the most ancient times in the development of parliamentary government and executive-legislative government, the power of the purse has been a legislative power. The power to determine and set the priorities for the state has been historically and ought to be in this State a legislative power. It is a power in which the governor participates by recommending the priorities in a budget, and it is the priorities established by the legislature by appropriations.

This amendment would make the legislature a constructive contributor to the budgetary process. If one is examining a budget, one cannot do a good job of it if you can ask only half the questions, and this is the position in which the Maryland General Assembly finds itself today. It can ask of the administration only, are you doing too much, and it can predict with a certainty that is the same in every session that the answer to that question will be in the negative.

But on no program can the General Assembly ask: are you doing enough? I submit that that question is at least as im-

portant if we are going to meet the pressing public problems of this State as the question: are you doing too much?

Now, there is good reason that the budget not exceed the revenues available. There is good reason to require a balanced budget in State government. This amendment requires a balanced budget. It would not permit the General Assembly to increase the budget beyond the estimate of revenues submitted by the government. It would permit the General Assembly, if it strikes out a proposed appropriation for one area of state government, to utilize that money in the same bill for another area of state government which, in its judgment as an independently elected arm of this state government, it decides deserves greater support than was given to the governor's budget as proposed.

The governor and the General Assembly are coordinate branches of the government. The governor and the General Assembly both have an obligation to the people of this State to attempt to understand the public interest and to act on the basis of their understanding of the public interest. No branch of government, neither the General Assembly nor the governor, is so omniscient that we should be willing to give it not only the initiative, but really the ultimate power in determining the priorities which this State will follow in the conduct of its business and in the conduct of its government.

Under the present system and the system as proposed in the report of the Committee, it would be conceivable, it would be possible, it has occurred in other states, and it could occur in this State, that the governor would be hostile to a program enacted by the legislature for what the legislature felt was good and sufficient cause, and signed into law by that or a preceding governor. Yet the governor could so reduce the budget of that program that it would, for all practical purposes, be dead, and the legislature, under the present budgetary system, would not be able to meet that kind of a problem.

I believe that we should retain both flexibility and responsibility. If we then give, as this amendment proposes, the General Assembly the power to increase a recommendation of the governor within the estimates of revenues so that the budget remains balanced, we who have introduced this amendment believe we should give the governor an according power to reduce or veto any such increase, that he should do it, and that the General Assembly should