

how long it will take. There's only one vote here.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Time.

SENATOR WITEK: I hope you will think carefully before you make it. Thank you.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I rise in support of the committee amendments and urge the committee amendments to be adopted. There's a lot of reasons I think that we should do this. One of them is of great concern to me is the advent of paid petition circulators and this amendment will finally find some way to address that issue. You know, I've been in this Legislature now 17 years and it was some time after I was here that we found the court ruling that allowed for paid petitioners. This Legislature, this state did not approve of, did not support paid petition circulators, but the court ruled and changed the rules of the game on us and we honestly dealt with it by saying yes, we will have to allow for that to happen. And we tried to find ways to identify paid petition circulators, we tried to find ways in which to mediate the negative impact of that court ruling, but it's a court ruling we have lived with and do today. But this chance to adopt this committee amendment gives us an opportunity to discuss how we deal with that very important issue because paid petition circulators have changed the dynamic petition drives in the State of Nebraska. They have taken it away from the hands of the grassroots people and made it something that you can, in essence, buy when you have the ability to hire the circulators that go out and get the signatures. So in my view the court ruling which puts this issue back into our hands is one that we should not let the opportunity pass in which to deal with it and address the broad concerns that many of us have with the way petitions and petition process has changed over the years. Now I think Senator Witek has been talking about honesty, and I think this Legislature dealt honestly with the court ruling and placed back on the ballot all those different measures or will place all those measures that were taken off the ballot because of the court ruling. We have recognized that the people have a right to vote on those and the other petition drives that went out there and failed, I know that they felt badly about it but term limits was able to take the remaining time and with paid petition circulators, turn it around, but at the same time it