

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Senator Dierks. Is there anyone else that would care to speak to the Beutler amendment? Seeing none, Senator Beutler, to close on your amendment.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Hall, members of the Legislature, I think it's probably clear with everybody what the amendment does. And I would just repeat it one more time. And that is basically, starting on January 2nd of 1999, it would require all initiative petitions, whether for the constitution or statutes, all initiative petitions to be filed nine months prior to the election date instead of four months, which is currently what we do. And again the reason that I'm suggesting that is because I think it can have an enormous positive impact on the whole process if initiative people know and if the Legislature knows that there will be an opportunity for the Legislature to review these propositions before they go on the ballot, and that the possibility may exist that the Legislature would promote an alternative initiative. Again, you'll have to make up your own minds about the language in the constitution and the wisdom of having the constitutional language changed as opposed to simply trying to change the statute language. I hope that Senator Withem will bring back his amendment on this particular bill to reconstruct the facilitate language. But until that's done or unless that's done, I think that the more comfortable position is to change the constitution, if you like the concept. And so I would ask you once again to give serious consideration to this possibility. I would also say that I...and I should say quite strongly that I think in terms of the adoption by the people of the state of this particular constitutional amendment, should it contain this provision, will not be changed, will not be adversely affected in any way. And that's for two reasons. One, because I think the people of the state most certainly want the signature requirements restored, and that's going to be the powerful, overriding concern in terms of how the people of the state view this constitutional provision, regardless of whether this amendment is added to it or not. But secondly, why would the people of the state object? I...you know, I try to detach myself from this Legislature and get out there into people's minds and try to think of what they're thinking. But why would they be against this provision? All it does is give them more choices, and therefore I can't believe that this would have any negative effect upon the constitutional amendment next year, but rather that it would probably have a positive effect, because I think the people of the state like initiative, but they also