

you who have not been appointed this year, Lee and John, who have had the experience of coming into a session, in a long session, know how awful it is, because you end up being elected in November, but you aren't able to hire staff until you're actually sworn in. You aren't able to know what office you have until after that opening day. And for freshmen it's a particularly hard time to get yourself ready to serve as a senator. But it's even more than that. All members of the Legislature are kind of held in limbo from the time of the election, in November, until we meet again in January, because nobody is sure who is going to be the Speaker, who's going to be the chairs of the committee, what committees you're going to be assigned to, what offices you'll have, what staff you will be able to have, all of these things have to wait until we finally meet on that opening day. It basically not only wastes time, to start in January, of the session time, but it also wastes a couple of months of time in getting ready for the session because of the uncertainty of what will happen. So what this proposes in the amendment is that on the fifth Wednesday after the election in November, so essentially about a month after the election, we will sit down together and meet and there elect our leadership and take care of that process. And from that also elect and select people for the different committees, and then we will take the next step in assigning rooms, and then we will also be able to introduce some bills and get that process going so they can be printed and people can see that ahead of time. And it would be also nice to have the rules adopted, it seems to me, in those first few days that we would meet in December rather than the process that we went through this year. So you would basically take care of all that organizational matter that kind of crowds up and takes a lot of our time, and get that done ahead of time. And then break over the holidays, and what you've got is time to move into your new office, to hire the new staff, if you need to do that, to look at the bills that have been introduced. The public has a chance to see what's happening, what's coming forward. It is a much clearer, cleaner process for everybody, not just for us, but for the public at large. So then we would come back in January and we would have the ability to go into hearings and those bills introduced in December would be able to have hearings, and then go into session and move quickly and take action and not waste time. When I say act quickly, though keep in mind a month has passed since the bills got introduced. There's a lot of time for people to see the bills, to read the bills, and to learn about