

January 10, 1985

SENATOR DECAMP: Mr. President, you see the trouble with what Senator Chambers said, you might as well know it, it is the truth and we can't afford too much of that or it's going to screw up the system. Now a strict seniority system isn't that bad a system if you want to do a strict seniority system. I can live with that. That is why the amendment is there. Under a strict seniority system, let's see, Cal would still be chairman of Revenue, Bernice would be whatever she was running for on the basis of yesterday, between the contestants. Oh, well then he'd still be Speaker. Well that will work out fine. Well let's see, a couple of the other races would switch significantly. A strict seniority system has as much merit or lack of merit as any other criteria we use, whether it be for selection of committee members, selection of chairmen, whatever. You see the absolute final truth is none of the systems are very perfect. At the federal level you have seen the flaws that develop with a strict seniority system. Some people, sometimes 80 and 90 years old, because they have been there 100 years, end up being chairmen, and some lesser talent, some lesser talent sometimes goes by the wayside. So every system is going to have its problems. Ours has its. I guess if I were rewriting yesterday, I'd write it completely different. No secret about it. I was supporting Bernice. I went on the theory that the two-year thing wasn't a bad thing. In fact, I talked to Bill about this. But either do it all the way, or not at all because if you are going to disrupt the system and start something new then at least adopt a complete system. Obviously, for me a seniority system wouldn't be that bad a deal about this time. Fourteen years ago, when I first came here, it wouldn't have been that great a deal. Our system, I think, could be enhanced by a public vote. But I don't think I'd ever get that done. In a public vote I think some things would be different. So I offer the amendment in all seriousness. If you want to change the system, from the Committee on Committees, the selection by secret ballot, then the selection of chairmen by secret ballot, if you want to change it do it all the way. A strict seniority system may be better, may be worse, but at least it is a complete system. Either go all the way, or not at all. There is no question, in my humble opinion, that the single most blatant abuse of this Legislature, over the past 14 years that Ernie and I have been here together, and every man, woman and child in this room knows that Ernie and I have had probably