

offering this amendment is to give everyone who wants an opportunity to sum up, really sum up on this bill. I assume the bill will then be read and we will vote it up or down, up or down. So this, after some other people have had an opportunity to speak here, my plan is to withdraw the amendment but I feel the need at this point to discuss this bill very briefly one more time before we vote. Now my position on this bill from the beginning has been, yes, some Class I's should be merged, some Class I's should be merged, but not all Class I's should be merged. Now this bill will merge all Class I's and I do not favor that across the board mechanism which will merge all Class I's. There is some of those Class I's out there that are viable, that really deserve to exist. They perform a service to the people in that area and they should not be merged. Now I would also tell you that you have gotten our attention. This bill has gotten the attention of the Class I people, of the rural people, and I can assure you that if this bill is defeated, there will be a meaningful study, there will be an effort to come up with language which will merge some Class I's but will leave some Class I's out there that should be there. Now I have sincerely tried during all the debate on this bill to make it a better bill, to make it a bill that we in the rural areas could live with if the bill does pass, and I proposed the affiliation amendment which I think would have done that. Had that amendment been left on there in a whole form, in a practical form, most of the Class I's would agree to that because their overwhelming desire is to keep those youngsters at home, near home, and have control of that local school, and that is what affiliation would have done. Amendments which were later adopted really make the affiliation part of the bill which remains nonexistent and just practically worthless. So affiliation for all practical purposes is not in the bill. Now another part of the bill that has been touted has been the fact that the people in the original Class I district will have a vote on whether or not to keep that Class I attendance center open if they are merged with another school. I have had two or three Attorney General's opinions on various proposals along that line that have been in the bill from time to time. Just now, I just passed out, it should be on your desk at this time an Attorney General's opinion which came down this morning which says, in effect, that this voting procedure is suspect. We are talking about Section 12 of the bill. Section 12 of the bill is that part of the bill which states that if there is a merger the people who are living in that