

Officer...there you are. There you are, Howard. We have an amendment on deck that you are handling. Did you present this yesterday? I left before.

SENATOR LAMB: Mr. President and members, to review those of you who were here and a number of you who were not here late yesterday afternoon, Senator Vickers presented an amendment to the committee amendment which, in effect, does become the bill. That was adopted. That establishes a commission to realign judicial districts. The commission is made up of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court as Chairman, one other member of the Supreme Court, I believe two other judges and two lay people appointed by the Governor. Now, historically, the Legislature has changed judicial districts when that was necessary in order to reflect changing workloads. In fact, the Constitution gives that authority to the Legislature. Article V, Section 11, of the Constitution says the Legislature may change the number of judges of the District Courts and alter the boundaries of judicial districts. So his amendment would give absolute sway to this commission. This commission would be able to reduce the number of judicial districts after the initial two-year period and change those boundaries, whereas the Legislature now has that authority. My amendment to the Beutler amendment would make this new commission advisory, advisory. They would study the workload and make a recommendation to the Legislature for the Legislature's action. The Legislature could adopt the recommendations of the commission. They could change those recommendations or they could reject them. My amendment is found on page 2188 of the Journal. Now one of the arguments Senator Beutler used yesterday was that the Legislature never gets around to changing those districts, that we add a judge sort of helter skelter here and there but we don't balance the workloads. I would submit that this year we did. We passed LB 287. This was the bill, and it has been passed on Final Reading, a bill introduced by Senators Nichol, Baack and Scofield. It did change a judicial district, a situation out in District 17 which did contain Scotts Bluff, Morrill and Garden Counties. There was too much of a workload in that area so Morrill County was put over in District 16 and Garden County was attached to District 19. So his argument that judicial districts are never changed by the Legislature simply are not always true. A big objection also that I have with giving all this authority to this commission is the fact that they could reduce the number of districts