

January 9, 1986

I asked some people what this meant? Can they come and get me? Senator Nichol and I had an interesting discussion, I don't know if he would use the term interesting or not, about that at that time, along with some other people. Some people said, yes, that means they can come and get you, if the majority vote puts the house under call, they ask that this be instituted, they can come and get you. Others said, no, it's not because if you've excused yourself with the Clerk, that clarifies it. Senator Lamb, I think, made some reference here to a few years ago, long before I got here, to a time when at the close of a session a number of people were gone. This was put into effect and they did send people to all parts of the country to pick up people to bring them back here for a vote. Some people questioned whether that was the right thing to do. What I suggested to Senator Morehead was, this needs to be clarified. Does an excuse take precedence over being summoned back by the body? Does that only apply to those who fail to excuse themselves or does this provision design to take precedence in the super unique situations where the presence of every member here is needed to do some vital business for the state? Does that section take precedence over it? The proposed rule in front of you is one which, yes, does clarify that. I guess my personal value judgment, even though I was on the other end of this a couple of months ago, is that it clarifies it in the wrong direction. I think probably that in those unique situations where the vital business of the state is before us, that we as a body, maybe through some super majority, maybe through some other mechanism, yes, we can say, we're going to stand at ease until all 49 members are here in order to represent the public's business and help us get the job done for the public. For that reason I think this proposal which allows us, as Senator Haberman pointed out here a while ago, to see a tough vote that we don't want to be recorded on, when that comes up for debate, go up to the desk and say I'd like to be excused, go down and sit in our office and wait until the vote takes place and just avoid that vote, I don't think that's good policy. I don't think those are good rules to operate under. I think we should have, although a rarely used mechanism, we should have a mechanism in those rare instances to call people from wherever they are to come forward and be counted on these very important measures. For that reason, even though I asked for the clarification, I guess I don't approve particularly of the direction the clarification is going and I'm not going to support this rule change.