

January 9, 1986

SENATOR HABERMAN: Mr. President, members of the body, I rise to oppose the amendment and the amendment. It seems as though for some reason this has become the year that we want to change everything, change committees, change the bill introductions, in a 60-day session let's just tear everything apart and start all over again. Now it is quite true that I have people in my district say that we introduce too many bills and I ask them and they say, yes. So then I say to them, okay, you put a limit on me or on a committee and then you come to me and want legislation introduced and we say, I am sorry, I have already got my quota. I have to decide the priority. So now the idea is to give this authority to a committee. Now if you don't like what the committee does, then you can get 25 votes, bring it to the floor. Well, I predict we are going to have more fights and spend more time getting 25 votes to bring a bill out of the committee that the committee says isn't important than you are if we keep on going the way we are now. Now Senator Johnson says this is the way to separate the chaff from the wheat. Well, I wonder if Senator Johnson does the same thing on clients, he separates which ones he wants and which ones he doesn't want. Now I don't think this is right. Our system is built on a senator has the right and privilege to introduce a bill and the bill has a right to have a public hearing. Now the committee chairman and the committee, if they function the way the chairman wants them to, they can dispose of those bills in a short time after the public hearing on every bill. You can say, okay, we are going to go down this list of bills, and we are going to advance them or we are going to kill them. There is no need to hold them. Let's just quit playing games. Let's get them out of here. So if the committee chairman and the committee really wants to function as they can after a public hearing, they can do so but I think it is wrong, especially in a 60-day session, to try to change these things, to try to make the committee responsible for what is a bill that deserves a public hearing and what is a bill that doesn't. By what criteria are committees going to decide? One committee might have a completely different criteria than another one. So you are going to say, well, so-and-so over here said that this type of a bill is all right, it doesn't seem important to me but, boy, this bill over here that was important they killed. So this limiting business, I will admit that the public says we introduce too many bills, but I must confess to you this noon I had lunch with a lobbyist and he bought