

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Barrett, please.

SENATOR BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. President and members. I, like many in this body, I specifically think of Senator Lamb in this case, had many, many problems with the original LB 516. The amendment which Senators Hoagland, and Baack, and I are offering to the body essentially guts the original bill, 516. We have been in communication with a number of district judges and county judges across the state, and there does seem to be considerable unanimity insofar as the amendment is now concerned. We do have some agreement. I think the bill now is an excellent idea. It represents an excellent compromise position. We are using the Judicial Qualifications Commission form now to arrive at a consensus position and, remember, that if a vacancy does exist, the Judicial Resources Commission will meet to determine where in the state that vacancy exists, and in no case will a county be left without a judge assigned to its particular caseload. The rules and the regulations for the operation of the commission will be drafted by the Supreme Court. I feel very comfortable with the amendment now, and I would urge the body to support the amendment. Thank you.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Baack, please, then Senator Lamb.

SENATOR BAACK: Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I, too, rise to support this amendment. I think it has been well worked out. I think we have got some of the real flaws worked out in the original 516. I have talked to some judges and things from my district who were totally dissatisfied with 516 but who have looked at this and say that this is the kind of compromise measure they have been looking for over the years. They feel that something does need to be done as far as judicial redistricting in this state, and I think that this provides an answer to it. As for Senator Sieck's concerns about whether or not we are going to change the boundaries or we are not going to have a district judge in an area, I think that those questions are answered in the bill because it still maintains the fact that there will always be at least one district judge in every district and that each county will always have a county judge. So I think those concerns are met in this amendment. So I would urge you to vote for this amendment and then pass 516 on to Final Reading. Thank you.