

want. But I think this is typical of what they are trying to do here. Quite frankly, I think we could offer probably about 25 different amendments, paring down this bill to virtually nothing except a couple small pieces that they really want, and that would be no competition for local service. I think that is what they want. Some of these other companies involved, they want competition for the interstate long distance. But those are the two areas that they really want with the bill. And a lot of the stuff was just put on because they thought they could get away with it. Now I suppose it really doesn't make much difference whether we support this amendment or oppose the amendment. I guess if Senator Hoagland wouldn't support the bill I'd be more inclined to vote against the amendment because it is getting pretty close, 25 votes are getting pretty tight. I think we all realize that. Every single vote is important in here because they're going to need 25. The Governor has said he will sign the bill, so the 25 votes will be important. And they will only need 25 because there will be no veto. It will be up to this body to make the decision. I want you to keep that in mind when you think about this amendment but when you are thinking about the bill.

SPEAKER NICHOL: One minute.

SENATOR ABOUD: Because of the confusion they brought in a bill here which is the most far-reaching bill that has been introduced, or is being considered throughout the country. There is not one state in the Union that has a bill that allows them to have no competition for local service. This bill will increase telephone rates, there is no question about that. And you 25 that finally vote for this bill will be the ones instituting a telephone rate increase which I believe will go far beyond the tax and spending issues we've been talking about in the session. I agree with Senator Harris when he says this is probably the most far-reaching piece of legislation we will consider this year. I still can't believe it is moving along. I still can't believe it is on Select File.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Time.

SENATOR ABOUD: But I owe that to the fact of the confusion of the bill. Thank you.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Thank you. Senator Withem, please.

SENATOR WITHEM: I call the question.