

January 14, 1991

free debate in this Legislature is a valuable one for us to discuss. I think the points that have been raised about the value of having open, free, unfettered debate is...I agree with most of what has been said. I think even in those cases where we have had an individual senator stand up and for purposes of delaying the body from making a decision that that individual senator is against has been valuable. I can remember any number of times that, and I will mention some names here, that Senator Chambers has read a bill perhaps more carefully than some other members of the body, that the initial intent on the floor of the Legislature is to simply pass that bill on without a lot of discussion, and he has, by raising amendments that are frankly nonsubstantive but they are for purposes of delaying consideration, has talked sense into the body where the body has decided that, no, the original bill is not such a good bill and has brought the body to its sense. I think that type of debate and discussion is valuable, even the case of delaying a bill. Even in the case of one individual standing up and attempting to thwart the majority will is a valuable process to go through, but there has to be an end to it. There has to be a point at which the body can, after giving full, careful consideration to all the views of the minority, even those views that are designed simply to delay and not to enlighten, that the will of the body must have an opportunity to prevail. I think after eight hours of debate at a particular stage of consideration that the body ought to be able to express its collective will at that point to send a bill on to further consideration. I guess I would also like to bring up something that people have been tiptoeing around all morning here and that is the subject matter that was the victim of the most recent filibuster attempt last year, being the abortion decision. My guess is had this cloture motion been in effect at the time of the discussions on the parental notification and the twenty-four hour waiting period, it would never have been used successfully. This motion requires two-thirds of the members of the body to invoke it. I don't think at any time, if you remember, one of the reasons we had major problems with that bill last year is they could not succeed in a simple 30 vote motion to suspend the rules the previous year. I do not think you will ever see this particular motion invoked on an abortion question because I don't think there will be two-thirds of the members of the body willing to shut off debate on that important a topic to put it into effect. But in those cases where there is a clear two-thirds membership portion of the body wishing to invoke it, say its will, after there has been eight hours of debate at one stage of