

Committee, after the decision had come down in the courts, I felt that it was my responsibility to carry that bill through the Legislature because otherwise we had a law on the books that had been ruled unconstitutional by the courts. Now we come to the methods of implementing that, and I think that this is a very reasonable method of regulating the petition circulators. And the courts have not said that you have no ability at all to reasonably regulate petition circulators. All they have said is that you cannot have a law that prohibits payment of petition circulators and this certainly does not do that. This does not prohibit payment. It just sets up a mechanism and puts into place a mechanism for how they are going to be paid, and put some responsibility on the people who are hiring the petition circulators as to how they are going to pay them. And I think it is a better system than by paying them by the signature. I know that I ran into petition circulators, as did a number of you, in the last campaigns who had no knowledge of what they were circulating, absolutely no knowledge at all, but if they could put enough harassment on people, they could get them to sign and then they were paid by however many they got to sign. I think this puts some reasonable regulation on it and provides us a mechanism in starting to regulate petition circulators. I don't think we are even going far enough yet. I think we are going to have to look at more methods of trying to get this process be more meaningful. I think by the idea that we can just have unlimited payment of petition circulators and they can do it anyway that they want to do is an abrogation of the process. We do not want to do that, I don't think. I disagree with Senator Schmit that there is no such thing as a grass roots. I think there is, and I think it happens. I think it happened on 662. We put the cause out there because we passed 662, but there certainly was a grass roots movement to put that on the ballot. They did not need to pay people to get to sign those petitions. They did not need to pay petition circulators to get that done. They were able to do it. I think that the petition process is one that we need to protect. It is a very important right of the individuals to have that process and I think we need to have in place the proper kind of regulation of that process so that we do protect the process, and I think that LB 17 is definitely a start in that direction, and I would certainly urge your advancement of LB 17. Thank you, Madam President.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Speaker Baack. I will now recognize Senator Schmit, followed by Senators Withem and Labeledz. Senator