

you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Further discussion? Senator Hall, followed by Senators Schmit, Chambers and Wehrbein.

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Mr. President, and members, I rise in support of Senator Johnson's amendment. And I think that whether you intend to support LR 2CA or not, it's vitally important that you support the amendment that is before us because in order so that the constitutional amendment is not thrown out at some point down the road, I think Rod's amendment clearly will alleviate that problem or, at least, to a great extent it will and I think that you should support the Johnson amendment. And I happen to be an opponent of LR 2CA but I think Senator Johnson, rightly so, brings this amendment to correct some of the problems with LR 2CA. My opposition to the constitutional amendment has not changed from General File debate. It is still the issue, I guess, of equity and at what point do we say classes of property are treated the same. I did not, as Senator Landis did, change my mind since opposing Amendment 4 those years back. I still oppose LR 2CA, based on the issue of equity. Should land be treated the same? And I think it should. Now, should we look at the issue of reducing the overall reliance on property tax which is the root of our problem? Yes, we should and we're starting to move in that direction. If we pass LR 2CA, it's my opinion that the willingness of the body to continue to look at that overreliance on property taxes will dwindle, it will fade. We will begin to think that, well, it's not a problem or near the problem as it has been. And as the agricultural cycle goes around again, the 10 to 20-year cycle or three to four, depending on who you talk to, goes around again and agricultural prices go up and the economy continues to improve, the desire to look at the property tax issue fades but it doesn't fade for the folks in my district. Those people who live in homes that they put aside more money each month to pay for their property taxes than they did when they made the payments on those houses 25 years ago have as difficult a time maintaining their lifestyle as these folks in the rural areas. It's not an issue of rural versus urban. It's not an issue of, we don't like the rural lifestyle. It happens to be an issue of tax equity and it happens to be an issue of overreliance on property taxes by the local subdivisions of government. And until we address that issue fully, until we say that we agree that property taxes bear too great a burden for the cost of government at the local level,