

exempted, then you ought to exempt everybody from it because that is what is continuing status quo. I am a little frustrated as you can tell because I am getting two different pictures painted here, and they can't both be right. This issue of utility corporation conflict competition with private industry is a big issue in the national ba...it is not big in the sense that it is not bringing legislatures to its knees, and it is not, you know, the major issue of any session. It is not on the watershed, but it is something that is being debated and argued in legislature after legislature after legislature. I have been urged by some people, and, again, I want to point out these are not the people I work for, these are some people that I happened to become acquainted with as I think Senator Hall happened to become acquainted with some of them. I have been urged to bring this issue to the floor of the Legislature to attempt to deal with it. I have resisted that because, by and large, I think the utility corporations in this state are doing a fine job and don't need to be harassed, but all I am asking for this amendment is that in this particular situation in regulation by the Department of Insurance that they all be treated the same. And, frankly, I don't care one way or the other, whether it is the private, that everybody is exempted or that nobody is exempted. You know, my position on the issue is that the Withem amendment treats everybody the same. It becomes a level playing field and it is not really a level playing field when you talk about the type of people that are in business, five or six employees, versus a corporation, and I understand all of the arguments about cross-subsidization and the abilities of, you know, city councils to check their books to see if there is cross-subsidization. I also know how difficult it is to really distinguish when you start assigning assets of a common building, common, owned materials to one side of the operation versus the other to really be sure that there isn't this cross-subsidization going on. I hope, like I say, I resisted bringing this as an issue even though I have been urged to do so, but I guess it appears to be here. All I am saying at this point is let's keep the playing field level and...

SPEAKER BARRETT: One minute.

SENATOR WITHEM: ...let's support this amendment.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Hartnett, followed by Senator Conway.