

are visiting and would you please welcome them to our Legislature this morning. Thank you, Jeremy Hearder and Kay Hearder. We appreciate your visiting us this morning. Senator Rod Johnson, followed by Senator Hall and Senator Wesely.

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Mr. President and members, I am going to be brief. I just would indicate that I am opposed to this amendment. I would like to bring some sensibility back into this whole issue, and I apologize that we are taking so much time, but, quite honestly, Senator Schmit is correct in his assessment. This is, probably, the most important agricultural issue that this Legislature will discuss, and I think we should take some time in considering that this year. But as I indicated, I have an amendment that is forthcoming that I would like to ask this body to bring the bill back and adopt. That would lay the bill over for at least a day and give us an opportunity to discuss further Senator Schmit's amendment or Senator Chambers idea, whatever might win out in discussions or arbitration. But, in any case, there is ample opportunity, I think, for further discussion and on another date. I would like to indicate to this body that I have never attempted to represent LR 2CA as being a bill that provides preferential treatment to agriculture. I am convinced, as one farmer, that the gravy train of tax preference and the gravy train of federal subsidies is rapidly coming to an end. We have to recognize that and we have to move forward, and I don't want to tie this Legislature's hands. I want fair tax treatment for agriculture. I don't want tax treatment that is going to be so fair that we are going to place the burden of property taxes on other classes of property, but I want to make sure that the earnings capacity is protected and, quite honestly, is kept in this state. I like it. I think it works. It is the best...probably the best formula that we have developed in this state for a number of years. I don't know what this body's will is with this bill. We have got a long ways to go before it is actually passed, but if you want to vote against the bill, fine. But for those of us that'd like to move the bill or to try and put the bill in shape in which we would like to see it on the ballot, I hope that you consider rejecting this particular amendment, give me an opportunity to present the amendment that is forthcoming, and then deal with that issue. I will be honest with you, folks. I said this a year ago. I don't know what the answer is to this issue. I really don't. I am doing the best I can to represent what I think is an alternative. If there is a better idea, I will let anyone of you take it. This happens to be my priority