

January 4, 1990

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Withem, please.

SENATOR WITHEM: Yeah, Mr. President, and members of the body, just to add a little bit again to what the people in the Rules Committee discussed when this came up. Frankly, Senator Chambers, I think there was a lot of support for your position on the Rules Committee when Senator Korshoj brought this matter to us for consideration because the committee did not think that it proper to have, for instance, a five to four vote, nine people on the floor, five voting yes to cease debate, four no, calling the vote and saying debate is ceased and only nine members are voting on it. On the other hand, we did, in fact, sympathize with Senator Korshoj's situation as he brought it to us. He was bringing up situations where we will have a measure on the floor that a lot of people want to speak on, but when a motion to cease debate comes up and there is 20 people wanting to cease debate and nobody voting against it, but there are only 20 people on the floor and everybody here wants to cease debate, having to go through the process of asking for a call of the house, get people to come in who weren't even here for the debate, to come in to cease debate. The minute they vote to cease debate, then they leave again, taking five or ten minutes to do that, so we are trying to come up with a situation where we can accommodate both viewpoints, expedite the business when it is the sense of the body to expedite it, but to allow for the minority viewpoint. Now in practice what will happen if Ron Withem still wants to give a speech on a measure and I am the only one that does, Senator Baack doesn't want to hear it, he has indicated, but other than that, if I want to give a speech and the vote to cease debate is 15 to 1, I will exercise my right as a member to ask for a call of the house, to ask then for a roll call vote. So in that case in practicality, there will have to be the 25 votes to actually cease debate. The only time that this will really be workable and maybe we ought to do a unanimous...maybe a unanimous consent sort of thing would work better in this particular case, I don't know, but the only time that this will really be workable is in a situation where really nobody is opposed to ceasing debate, it is just that we don't have the obligatory 25 votes on the floor to make it pass. As far as your statement, Senator Chambers, that we ought to make it...that we shouldn't have varying standards for passage of a motion, we do have a precedent in the rules where on noncontroversial resolution requires a vote by a majority of those voting unless a single member requests that it be a full