

January 4, 1990

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Senator Lynch, members of the Rules Committee, appreciate your advancement of this rule change. Ladies and gentlemen of the Legislature, it seems to me that this is clearly an issue of the legislative branch of government maintaining its prerogatives as a body of equal stature with the executive and judicial branches. One of the rights of this body is once we pass a bill or a budget and send it to the Governor, that Governor then has the right to veto or line-item veto those measures. But it is also the right of the Legislature to consider vetoes by the Governor and override, if we so desire, by 30 votes those vetoes. Unfortunately, this was a problem that came up last session, it always does, every end of the session we have a problem with vetoes and having the time to consider fully overrides of those measures vetoed by the Governor. But particularly last session we ran out of time and sent over to the Governor a number of measures that we adjourned before action was taken by the Governor on. And when it came time for the Legislature to have any chance to respond to those vetoes, we had already adjourned and so no action was taken. I felt very badly about that. Whether you agreed or disagreed with the vetoes, whether you agreed or disagreed that we should have overridden those vetoes doesn't matter. But the right of this Legislature to consider any veto is, I think, fundamental. It's a fundamental right of any legislative branch to be an equal partner in state government, and we should never allow ourselves to be, at the end of the session, unable to respond to vetoes. And that is what happened last session. This has not happened frequently in the past, but every once in awhile we do have this problem. This rule change would allow us at least some ability to, as far as we can go, allow us a chance to override vetoes by requiring at least a five-day waiting period, which is what the Governor is allowed to hold a bill for before deciding whether to sign or not to sign a bill. Now, for instance, this legislative session Speaker Barrett has provided for a three calendar day waiting period before the last day. All that would be required, under this rule change, would be to go two more days and we will have successfully allowed ourselves every opportunity to override vetoes, if we so desire on that last legislative day. That last legislative day, however, does not have to only deal with overrides. This rule change would allow for other measures to be considered. So we could still end up in a situation where we're passing bills on the last day, and go home and have vetoes and can't respond to them. But you know this has happened before. It's happened every chance, I guess, the Legislature has allowed for a Governor to do that,