

PRESIDENT: Senator Withem, please. Just a moment till we get you turned on here. Now try it.

SENATOR WITHEM: Yes, you missed my saying, Mr. President and members of the body. That was an important part of my...

PRESIDENT: We want to get in for sure.

SENATOR WITHEM: Yeah, make sure that gets into the record. LB 514 is a bill brought to us by Senators Schimek and Baack. It is a bill dealing with the health education curriculum of our state. Currently, health education is one of the very few things that is required of the state...required by the state to be in all curriculums around the state. There was a task force group of folks who dealt with this issue to bring about an update to that current statute. Senator Schimek will, I'm sure, just do an outstanding job explaining to you all of the ins and outs of what is being proposed here. The committee amendments do two fairly simple things. Number one, they correct a drafting error. In point 10 in the laundry list of things that need to be covered in a health education program, according to the bill, should be the concept of death and dying, teaching people about the mortality of man and all of those and dealing...being able to deal with grief and all of those things. When the bill got drafted, somehow the term "health and dying" appeared. What the committee amendments do is suggest replacing that with the language "death and dying", which was the original intent of the legislation. I know some people are going to want to argue whether or not that should be in a high school, junior high school, elementary school curriculum and it's fine to debate that topic. The committee amendments are an attempt just to get the bill back into the shape in which it was originally introduced. The second thing the committee amendments do is that they add back into the statutes awareness of the nature, causes and prevention of mental retardation and other developmental disabilities. That is in the current statute, it's my understanding. The original intent of the bill suggested deleting that language. A number of people appeared at the hearing thinking that it's important that all people have some awareness of the nature, causes and prevention of mental retardation and other developmental disabilities in any sort of health curriculum. The committee agreed with them and we're recommending in the committee amendments that that language be retained in our statute as we update our health education curriculum. So, with that, I will respond to any questions. If