

Texas after being there nine years. It happens to be a black mar as is often the case. And he stayed there two years after a lower court judge had ruled...

PRESIDENT: One minute.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: ...that the trial was tainted, he should not have been convicted, yet he had to sit on death row two additional years until an Appeals Court finally got around to confirming what that judge had found. Innocent people are convicted, innocent people are locked up. I want this Constitution of this state to protect the rights of citizens at least insofar as an appeal to the Supreme Court is concerned when you are charged with, convicted of a crime and sentenced. That is the least that we can do and I don't think it's too much to ask of the Supreme Court to listen and decide these types of appeals.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Kristensen, please.

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: Thank you, Mr. President, members, I rise to strenuously object to Senator Chambers' amendment. If you will remember a couple of weeks ago, I think it was January 11, we spent an entire day on this issue and this is the same amendment that was argued at that time and received a tremendous amount of debate, and I don't mind at all about us going back and reopening that issue to talk about it because it obviously is very important. However, there are some things with this amendment that I think we ought to look at. One of them is, is that Senator Chambers is going to put back into language what we struck out on the first page. If we put that language back in, we're back into the same problem that we have today. This whole issue is about the backlog in the Supreme Court and about the outcry that we've got two years of waiting till we get our appeals heard. Now Senator Chambers may stand up and say, well, the criminal cases are on track. Well they are. The criminal cases are only about 10 to 11, maybe a year behind to taking that time to process those. Meanwhile everything else in this state waits and it gets backed up and backed up. And the other argument that is going to be advanced here is, well, they're not going to have anything to do. Those judges are going to get fat and lazy over there and they're not going to have any cases to hear. Those people have 500 cases in backlog, 500. Now they write about 70 opinions per judge a year. That's all opinions. They're still going to have to deal with that backlog. The