

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: I'd like to have some of my time back, before you close.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Oh, okay.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: But I tell you I understand. And I said earlier, I have heard what you've been saying about this and I have struggled in my mind as to whether felony cases should go exclusively to the Supreme Court. But I still go back to the original contention that we are clogged in our Supreme Court now and those, by and large, it's been my understanding, as quoted directly to me from a person involved, that a large percent of those are presently civil cases that are backlogged. Most criminal cases, at least of a need, have been expedited reasonably well. And so, unless I can find a better solution to this, I think we need to continue on with this bill. I am still struggling with the felony situation. I am not sure as to what that impact would be if we let all felony cases automatically go to the Supreme Court. I am struggling with that. I am saying I hear what you're saying, I'm not ready to concede yet.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Chambers, followed by Senator Bernard-Stevens.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, and Senator Wehrbein, to continue kind of what you were discussing under your questions, an amendment that I offered would have allowed all of those civil cases to be handled in the way that LR 8 wants to handle them. They would not have gone, as a matter of right, to the Supreme Court for appeal. I'm not saying that it's my personal belief that they should not have that right. I was trying to strike a middle ground where, if something has to be taken from the citizens, we should retain, for the citizens that part protected by the Constitution which would go to their rights, as relates to their liberty being taken by the state. My amendment that I had tried on two occasions, once on General and once on Select, to offer would have guaranteed a person convicted of a felony the right to appeal to the Supreme Court, a right protected by the Constitution. All misdemeanor cases, all civil cases would have been shunted to the appellate court, as LR 8 proposes to do. I did not offer an amendment that would take those civil and misdemeanor cases out of LR 8. So we would have winnowed out over 60 percent of the cases that make the backlog, under my amendment, allowing only the felony appeals. And I think when