

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you, sir. The Chair is pleased to take a moment to announce that Senator Hefner has nine seniors from Coleridge High School visiting with us in our south balcony, with their teacher. Would you people please rise and be recognized. Thank you. We're glad to have you. Also, an announcement of special import to the Legislature. You will...you perhaps have noticed that Lieutenant Governor William Nichol has been wearing a beautiful boutonniere. The occasion, I am told, is the birthday of Lieutenant Governor Bill Nichol. Governor Nichol, please stand and take a bow. Happy birthday. A further announcement and a reminder that there will be a reception for the Lieutenant Governor in the Governor's Mansion starting at four-thirty this afternoon. Of course, you are all invited. Senator Withem, please.

SENATOR WITHEM: Yes, Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I am not in support of this McFarland amendment. Would just like to comment in general though on some things that Senator McFarland stated. I know when an individual has concerns about a bill, they do, in fact, want those to be considered, considered seriously and I think what Senator McFarland is offering are worthy points of debate and I think they do, in fact, aid the members' discussion and understanding of this legislation and I don't think we're just going through the motions. And I am sorry if he feels that way that we are just going through the motions. These are things that do need to be considered. And I think this question of who is on this Board of Regents and how they are chosen is, in fact, one that definitely does need to be considered and needs to be discussed. And even though I do not support this amendment, I am pleased that it is brought to us for some consideration. He brought the question, why are we increasing the membership on the Board of Regents? I think it's important that the members understand that we are not increasing the membership of the current Board of Regents. We are abolishing the current Board of Regents. It will no longer exist. We, on the commission, discussed and debated long and hard, is there another name we can come up with other than Board of Regents? Because we wanted to make it clear that this is not just a continuation of the current Board of Regents as they exist today, but it is, in fact, a new body with new authority, new powers, new responsibilities that we haven't had in this state before. So this is, in fact, a new body. It's a group of 11 individuals that no longer govern individual campuses but sits to provide coordination among all seven campuses. This is the heart of the bill. This is the reason we went through this