

CLERK: Yes, Mr. President, the next amendment is by Senator Landis. (See AM3205 on pages 1667-68 of the Legislative Journal.)

SPEAKER BARRETT: The call is raised and the Chair recognizes Senator Landis.

SENATOR LANDIS: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I made this amendment because of the issue I raised in my previous speech. I support the Johnson amendment. I support the idea of increasing penalties for the sale of drugs to kids. I don't support the idea of the geography in 976 and what the amendment does is this. It attaches itself to the Johnson amendment, and then if the Johnson amendment is attached to 976, it strikes the provisions that relate to the drug-free zones and, basically, replaces it with the Johnson amendment. In other words, what we get is the Johnson amendment standing alone, if this amendment is passed. Why? Because we are out to protect kids. That is what we are out to do, and it seems to me no different to exact a penalty whether that kid is being taken advantage of 990 feet away from the school as opposed to 1,003 feet away from the school. It is the child's tender years and the pain and suffering that a drug addiction will mean for the child and that is what we should be defending. Don't mix it with the issue of trying to defend certain spaces above others. It is a way of...in a way, think of what that message says? It says that it is twice as bad to addict a kid in one physical locale than it is in another one. Is that the message you want? Is it a message that you want some bravado, to have some drug dealer in some area take a spray paint and make a line down the street at 1,000 feet and have all the kids come up and laugh and say, well, here is the drug line and dance on one side or the other. The point is we are protecting kids, not city blocks, not streets, not curbs, not playgrounds, not video arcades, not swimming pools, not schools or churches, but kids. They deserve our protection and it shouldn't make a difference if they happen to be located in one part of the city or another, standing next to one kind of a facility or whether they are out in an open cornfield in the middle of Buffalo County. Those children deserve all the same protection and standards, and to sell them drugs is the same offense, it has the same heinous quality about it. The fact that it is done in the shadow of a church or a school does not increase the heinousness. It is in the taking advantage of a child that the heinousness inures, and for that