

celebrations we had last summer, citizens were coming up to me and complaining because petition circulators were badgering them, badgering them until they got a petition signed, and it was not necessarily then a voluntary action by the citizen to sign the petition to voice their concern. It was more just to get this person off my back I will sign it. There are lots of cases where individuals who were circulating petitions did not fully understand the measure which they were being brought forth and, again, those are documentable. I can bring any number of individuals in who said when they started questioning people about what they were signing found out that the individual carrying the petition really didn't understand it. They didn't have a strong commitment to it. Requiring that they be paid circulators, hopefully, will add a degree of professionalism to this process so that individuals will be better prepared to carry the petitions and explain those to people. The affixing of a signature to a petition is a valuable process in our democracy. It is not quite as sacred, necessarily, as the right to vote but it is pretty close to that. And what we had ought to be doing is protecting that citizen's right to understand what it is that they are signing, that citizen's right to impact on the process and make sure that they know what it is that they are impacting upon. Does this bill enhance the process of petition circulation? I think it does. I think it makes it a more professional process if we are going to be in the area of allowing, which we have to, petition paid circulators. Does it place an unreasonable burden on the petition circulators? I don't think it does. Individuals that have lots of money are still going to be able to hire lots of people to go out to get lots of signatures on their petitions. We are not going to impact upon that and I don't think that we could if we wanted to. I don't think that will be the effect of the bill. I think what this bill does is it adds a reasonable degree of regulation back into a process that we simply deregulated a couple of years ago. We have had some experience with it and I think it is a reasonable proposal. I would ask for your support.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Withem. Senator Schrock, do you wish to be recognized now? Senator Schrock.

SENATOR SCHROCK: Thank you, Madam Chairman, members of the Senate, I'd just rise in opposition to this bill. I don't think it is necessary. It just makes the people who circulate a petition who want to pay for the circulation of a petition, and I don't think they should have to pay for circulation of a