

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Wesely. I now recognize Senator Bernard-Stevens.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Madam President. Senator Wesely, I appreciate what you're saying about whether or not we in Nebraska should actually elect a clerk of the district court. I guess what I would like to bring your attention, and you may not have had a chance to really go through on the issues, as many of us don't, that's not the issue in this bill. That's just not the issue. Your issue is valid, Don, as to whether we in Nebraska should have a policy of electing district court clerks or not and if somebody wants to bring a bill to change the election process of that, that would be something that would be a very good thing to do. All this bill does is it says, hey...and what the committee amendments will do, by the way, is simply says we do have, by statute, elections of clerk of the district court. Communities that have 7,000 or more must have an election. That's the law. Okay, and what the law now is is that if you are between 6,000 and 7,000, if your county board agrees and if the judges agree, then they can opt to have their own election to have the clerk of the district court. If you're less than 6,000, you can't. It has to be incorporated by, I believe, the county clerk. What this bill would simply do is...what the committee amendments will do is simply say if your...if you have 7,000 people or more, you have to follow statute and you must have an election. Now whether we want to have the election, whether we should have the election, that should be another bill and we can debate whether that should be done. But the law now says you have to have an election. And what the committee amendments would do is say if you're under that then you can opt to have an election. You can opt to have a clerk of the district court if the county board agrees and if the judges agree. They have to agree to do that. So the county is going to have to say, yes, we want to do the money for the election; yes, we want to fund a new position for more money; yes, we want to do that, we feel the need, and if they want to do that, they have the option of doing so. And that's what the committee amendment would do.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Bernard-Stevens. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. I'm sorry to stir this up more than necessary but I think I understand what Senator Bernard-Stevens is saying and I appreciate the point. But if my ultimate goal