

is to not have clerk of the district court individuals elected, by expanding, through this committee amendment, the opportunity for more small counties to have election of district court judges (sic) will only make that goal more difficult to achieve. I mean, I understand what you're saying but, in fact, I'm still going to oppose the committee amendment, understanding that it may make life difficult for some smaller counties. And I will suggest that perhaps a way to deal with the issue, probably inappropriately, to amend this bill, but I would certainly raise the point that I just don't see why we're electing clerk of the district courts in any county in this state and I know that isn't the focus of what you're trying to do, Senator Bernard-Stevens, but it does raise the issue and I think some discussion and perhaps, you know, amendments are always valid, the sections are open and maybe we want to look at that. I'm just raising that point now. I'm going to simply vote against the committee amendments, I assume that they will be adopted, and discuss further with Senator Bernard-Stevens whether or not there is any point in pursuing this issue any further.

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

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Madam President, just a brief comment. I appreciate...sincerely appreciate what Senator Wesely's point he's bringing up. I just wanted to remind the body that the committee amendments will simply give us an area...a base of which to talk about. The committee amendment simply says...would say that counties that have below 7,000 would have the option, if they so chose to do so, to elect their own clerk of the district court. If we do not agree with the committee amendments, just so the body understands what it would then have, then you would have the bill as originally passed and that would simply be that if you had 7,000 or more, you must have an election; if you have between less than 7,000, but at least 6,000, then you could opt to have an election, if you so desire. So that would be the real decision that we have here. Do you want...the committee amendments would allow all people simply to have the option, if they so desire. Denial of the committee amendments would mean only communities between 7,000...excuse me, the bill would have it then down to 5,000 would be the option.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Bernard-Stevens. Seeing no one else wishing to discuss this issue, we will proceed.