

currently can continue to put it on the ribs, but any new brand that would be applied for after the date of this bill would have to be on either the front, or the rear of the animal. I think the main thing is that it amounts to a lot of dollars and those dollars are eventually passed on to our livestock producers, and so I would move for the amendment. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Schellpeper. Senator Wehrbein.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Yes, Madam President and members, I rise to support this amendment, mostly to call attention to the value of hides in the cattle industry today. I'll go through just a few figures briefly to have you understand the importance of this amendment. It's an effort to try to encourage other than rib branding in livestock. As you know, it's a very vital part of livestock identification in the United States. They were looking for other ways to identify livestock. Thus far branding has not...there's not been a method found to completely replace branding. So this is an effort to at least encourage, from this point forward, to brand other than the rib which, therefore, should enhance the value of a hide. A hide makes about 60 percent of the value of a drop, or the offal in an average critter, so roughly 50 to 60 to \$70, depending on market, is the value of a hide. If we could save simply \$5 a hide, which is an estimate that the industry has, in moving this brand location from the rib to another part of the animal's body, shoulder or rear, this would be an enhanced savings. So I felt this was an opportunity to try to encourage this approach. It's of interest in the industry. As near as we know it's broadly supported in the industry, and I'd encourage the adoption of this amendment.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Wehrbein. Senator Dierks.

SENATOR DIERKS: Madam President and members of the body, I'd just like to ask Senator Schellpeper a question.

SENATOR SCHELLPEPER: Yes.

SENATOR DIERKS: Actually, I had two, but Senator Wehrbein took care of one of them. I guess I was concerned about the actual dollar amount that would be saved by this piece of legislation, but the other thing I'm concerned about is who stimulated the legislation? Is this industry stimulated?