

SENATOR CONWAY: Very good question, because that is one that's being raised by those people who are in opposition, primarily, as I noticed Senator Lamb endorsed a letter that was sent to him by a deputy commissioner, saying everything is wonderful, and therefore why have this level of bureaucracy. I don't really believe this is much of a level of bureaucracy. We're basically taking three positions that are currently staffed, to some degree, in the Secretary of State's office, that being the Secretary of State, his deputy, and a secretary dedicate a great deal of their time to election, election law activity. And we're moving that underneath a commission, where we have a singular place where people can actually have their questions answered. We've been talking about that a lot today, but also an organization that can promulgate rules and regulations. Much of the problems we run into, in election law, because they're all in statute and they're being interpreted by 93 different county attorneys is where we're running into some of the problems. And in some cases, as we found in the District 30 election, and as we found in some of the recounts, there was simply a question of saying well, we do it a little bit different down here, and we can't sign on the back of the ballot because we don't have a back, we're printing on both sides, so therefore we're just ignoring the statute. Those are the kinds of things that could be handled via rule and reg in some body, much like...and designed much like we have in a nonpartisan sense, like the Accountability and Disclosure Commission, can sit down, they can go through. We have a very large bill that Senator Baack has been working on for two years that is in front of the committee that we need some independent group to sit down, under that codification of the statutes. And it isn't that our election laws are that goofy, it's the extent to which 93 counties are trying to dovetail their activities into those laws. And it was deemed by the committee as this being a proper means of having a group that, via the commission forum, that can hire a full-time expert, on board, the commissioner, who can make decisions on the spot, much like the Secretary of State does now, except the difference is the Secretary of State will admit to himself...or admit to us that he hasn't any authority. He can make decisions, but if the county doesn't like it, they can ignore it, because he has concurrent jurisdictional authority in election laws with the county attorneys, and the county attorneys generally prevail in that kind of argument. So when they call, they can get some procedural information. But this group could then promulgate rules and regulations, put on