

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members, I rise in opposition to Senator Smith's amendment. What she would do is strike the portions of the amendment found on page 2, lines 19 through 23, that deal with the...basically, the prohibitions that exist in the Constitution as it relates to special legislation and reimbursement of the depositors. We have talked about what, if anything, we could do to reimburse Commonwealth, State Securities and American Savings depositors. I have treated those people from day one when I came in the Legislature in a special session on this issue the same way I would as if they were in my district. And, at that time, there weren't any that were in my district. Now there happen to be. But the fact of the matter is that we ran up against a roadblock. We ran up against a stone wall, if you will, in terms of what we could or could not do with revenue dollars of the state, tax dollars for the state. And that's fine. That's a decision that probably was a good decision, at least on it's face. Now whether or not the...what the ultimate impact was for those depositors, I would argue, it probably wasn't a very good decision. But the system still works and what we do here is offer an amendment that allows for lottery proceeds, dollars that are generated and raised through government gambling, government sponsored gambling, and we're going to use...allow for a portion of that if a majority of the members of the Legislature so decide to pay back those depositors. That's what the ability of this amendment would allow for. It would take away, as far as I can tell from talking to individuals who helped draft this and who have been close to the Commonwealth issue and dealt with the lawsuits involved there, that this amendment would allow for, at least clear any barrier that remains and it deals with the issue of lottery proceeds, not state revenue as it is raised through general taxation. It clearly is a policy question and I don't have a problem with Senator Smith saying, let's vote on this separately. But I'm...I'm rising to oppose it because I believe that it very likely is the only provision, only opportunity left to those individuals who have been, in many cases, crippled by the problems that we have had because of the failure of those various institutions. So, with that, I don't need to get into the Commonwealth issue any more than that. I would just urge that you reject Senator Smith's amendment and then adopt the entire amendment to the proposal.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Hall. Further discussion on the Smith amendment. Senator Robinson, did you wish to discuss