

one thing, the language that you have here is very up front of what you will put on the ballot to let people know what they are voting for. You are absolutely right. The other ones that we had offered did not say that, and I was going to try to draft, redraft their amendment to say what the people would know what they were voting...so they would know what they were voting for when they did vote for it. But that issue, and, again, I say regardless of your feelings about that whole issue, the fiasco surrounding the Commonwealth situation, and the hardship that has resulted to many elderly people in particular, I have had...I only know one person in my district but it is sad. I mean he is a sad man. It is very hard for me to stand here and say this because I know he will know this, but this is not the place for us to be addressing this issue in the Constitution of the State. For that reason, I have to stand to oppose this one more time. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Smith. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Madam President. I rise in support of the amendment and ask your support as well. Senator Smith just said we ought not to address this issue in the Constitution. I am sorry, we have no choice. The Constitution has been the last barrier to reimbursing these depositors. This Legislature has passed legislation that would allow for the depositors to be reimbursed and I thank Senator Smith and the majority members of this body that allowed us to do that. The courts, Supreme Court, looking at the Constitution, said we can't do it. Unless we amend the Constitution, we will not have the opportunity, if we so choose, to reimburse these individuals. We must address the issue in the Constitution in my view. I don't think there is any better way to proceed at this point. I wish there were but I can't think of any and none of us at this point have a better idea. So we are suggesting, let's just go straight at it, allow the people the chance to decide this issue once and for all. If we don't take this step, if we don't put this issue on the ballot, if we don't allow a vote of the people, we will have it continue to linger over us like a dark cloud until I don't know how long. It has already been there since 1983. It is time we put it behind us. The way to definitively address the issue is to place it on a ballot, allow a vote of the people knowing full well what they are deciding to do. If they should say yes, then we could proceed and using lottery money reimburse these people over a period of time. Again, that would be up to the Legislature, but we would