

SENATOR HEFNER: Mr. President and members of the body, I rise to object to laying this bill over. This bill has been up a number of times, and I don't know how many times it has been laid over, or there had been a kill motion put on, or something. I think that now is the time that we want to act on it, and this is why I objected to laying this bill over again. Now I have been noticing the last week or ten days that about this time of the morning we only have between 35 and 40 senators on the floor. So Senator Chambers knew that, that there would only be about 40 or a maximum probably of 40 or 41 senators that would be here. And as I look across, yes, there are some senators missing, but how about the next bill that comes up? Are we going to lay that over too? Then we wouldn't have any more on the agenda to work on. So I think we need to take this bill up, debate it, and then vote it up or down, and let it go from there. Thank you.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Hefner. Senator Chambers, your light is on next. Did you wish to speak right now? Senator Ashford.

SENATOR ASHFORD: Are there any other speakers, Mr. President? Mr. Speaker, just for my information, are there any other speakers? Two more. Just very briefly, I would agree with Senator Chambers. At this point, I think the normal procedure is to pass over, to allow a senator whose priority bill has come up, to pass over that bill for whatever reason. In this case, Senator Chambers does not have a couple of his supporters for the bill here, but I think more importantly, this is a very, very difficult issue for many of us and one that needs to have a full debate and, quite frankly in my case, it is a measure that needs a lot more study. The issue of the Pardons Board, the issue of the Parole Board, the issue of how the death penalty fits into the criminal justice system in our state I think are all very extremely difficult issues. It is not appropriate for us necessarily to rush to judgment on this issue one way or the other, and those who want to have this bill debated today I sense want to debate it today so they can have a record vote on the issue. And that is not a reason, that is not a reason to debate a bill. This is... I can't think of a more serious and a more difficult issue than this one that we have to face, and if we have to face it this year, next year, and for the next five years, so be it. But for me, there are a lot of unanswered questions. One, what does life imprisonment without parole