

PRESIDENT MOUL: Senator Ashford.

SENATOR ASHFORD: Thank you, Madam President. This amendment is almost identical to the amendment that we ran last week, last Thursday in this bill, and I am running it again because I know there was some people missing that wanted to have an opportunity to vote on this concept. I am going to run this one more time, and if it fails, it fails, and that is it. But I...what this amendment does is it puts limitations on individual PAC, corporate, and labor union contributions, and, could I have a gavel, Madam President?

PRESIDENT MOUL: (Gavel.)

SENATOR ASHFORD: Thank you. It puts limits on those contributions, and in addition to that, it has an aggregate limit on contributions of PACs, corporations, and individual labor organizations and other associations. I think most of us understand whether or not we support this. I mean either you support individual limitations on contributions or you don't. Either you think that there is a problem with individual PACs giving 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 thousand dollars, or in the case of one PAC, in the last Governor's election, giving 70 or 80 thousand dollars. Now you either think that is good and healthy or you don't. I just don't think it is, and as I said before, I think it gives too much power to the special interest groups. I think it is important that those special interest groups are represented down here. I think it is important that they have the ability to give some contributions. I think it is important that they have the ability to bring their groups together to support or oppose certain candidates. I think that is healthy and that is all in the spirit of what Political Action Committees were designed to do, but when Political Action Committees, or corporations, or associations can give one-half of or one-quarter of all of the contributions to a particular candidate, that is not healthy. That is unhealthy in my view. Now those of you who will vote against this or voted against this last time apparently don't agree with that. But I feel strongly that that is the crux of the problem. The second point I want to make is this, in the article this morning on the World-Herald, one of the most well-known lobbyist amongst those who lobby out there indicated that this kind of limit would not have any impact because the PACs would simply break up into smaller PACs and get around the contribution limit. Well, this