

amendments. I would encourage their adoption.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Coordsen. Mr. Clerk, amendments on the desk.

CLERK: Madam President, Senator Withem would move to amend the committee amendments. Senator, AM2413.

SENATOR WITHEM: I would withdraw that amendment.

PRESIDENT MOUL: We'll now proceed with debate on the committee amendments. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Madam President, members, I rise in somewhat reluctant fashion to support the committee amendments, but they are the compromise that was required to bring the bill out of committee. In particular, going from 50 to 100 employees does have a dramatic impact in the number of businesses that aren't covered under the bill. I don't know whether to start the discussion about the bill or not, but...but at 100 employees or more you're talking about 984 firms are what would be covered by this legislation. At 50 or more you would add another 1,299 firms to that number. So you can see that going from 50 to 100 has cut by more...well over half the number of firms affected by the legislation. But the number of employees does not drop that dramatically. Three hundred and twenty-eight thousand employees are covered under the bill, as amended by committee, with 100 or more employees being the base line. If you went back to 50 or more, you got 89,000 more employees. So, although I'd rather have it at 50, I'm willing to accept the idea of having 100 or more employees as the base. We'd also reduce from eight to six weeks the unpaid leave period of time. Again, I'd prefer having the eight weeks, but I think it's reasonable to go with the six. I did want to note one thing that's important in the committee amendments, it may not be as clear as those more highly identified figures. We add in here that a company, if they find it impossible or unreasonable to do so, does not have to reinstate an employee. This is to reflect if that company should have financial difficulties or other circumstances come up in the time the employees left, that aren't related to an employee taking the family medical leave, that company, if it's impossible and unreasonable to return that employee to their position, isn't required to under the bill. And there are other examples, but these committee amendments do weaken the bill, but I think are still not terribly unreasonable, and so I would rise