

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: And they are using us for their ends and that is not good for the Legislature and I hope that we reject this particular amendment. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Bernard-Stevens. Senator Rasmussen.

SENATOR RASMUSSEN: Madam President, members of the body, I, again, rise in opposition to this amendment, although I appreciate it is an effort to try and bring us closest together and I do think that that movement is there regardless of what we do with this particular amendment; that we have talked a lot about what we need to do in addition, or instead of, in my opinion, all the discussion about the legal status of abortion and restrictions and regulations through the law. I have a colleague and a friend who is opposed to abortion under any circumstances. My boss, in fact, is opposed to abortion under any circumstances, and we've had some very healthy discussions and have talked about the hope that we could do much of what we are talking about tonight through this commission in terms of pulling people together who care and who, first of all, identify those things where we will never have agreement and eliminate those from the discussion, at least from the time being. While I appreciate what Senator Labedz's point was trying to be in terms of her conversation just on our last talk about the plumber and his findings, it is that kind of language that pushes us further and further apart instead of bringing us together and we need to identify those issues and clear them out so that we can move forward in a different direction. We cannot continue to focus on language that accuses women of being baby killers, that makes presumptions about the status of the fetus. We will never have agreement on all those kinds of things and we need to move past them and identify those things which we can agree on. I have a vision that this commission would set as a goal that we are going to make a dramatic reduction in the number of unwanted pregnancies and abortions in the State of Nebraska, and then we set about, very objectively, talking about all the conditions that surround unwanted pregnancy. All unwanted pregnancies are not the same and they are varied in the circumstances that surround them. We need to identify all the reasons why women get abortions and we don't want to waste time trying to decide whether or not those are credible or legitimate or proper. We simply need to accept that if they give those reasons, we need to talk about doing something about those