

January 11, 1995

Senator Wickersham, about the amendment, let me ask you a question. How important is Section (a), the limitation on bill introductions to the entire concept of your amendment?

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Senator Wickersham.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Well Section (a) essentially provides us with the summer between the long session and the short session to conduct if it's necessary.

SPEAKER WITHEM: But if I were to introduce one during a 50-day session couldn't the committee on its own just not act upon that?

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: That is true. We could always hold it in committee.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Yeah. Yeah, I am considering, as a matter of fact, I have drafted an amendment and I'm thinking of offering it that would strike Section (a) from your rule change. I think looking at your process and establishing a detailed process in the rules so that everybody wants to change a retirement system knows what the process is going to be is a good idea. I have problems though with restricting an individual member's ability to introduce legislation in a particular subject matter area. I can think of...I could make a similar case that changes in school finance formula can only be introduced with an effective date two years hence so that nobody is impacted in the next year and make a strong argument in favor of that. I could see, say if you're going to amend the Constitution you should do that in the 90-day session because amending the basic document governing our state ought to be done with more deliberation than anything else that we do. I could see arguments like that beginning to restrict the way in which members conduct their business and I have real problems with doing that indicating that an individual member of the Legislature when that individual feels that an idea is ripe, being prohibited from introducing that idea at any time that that member feels that it is appropriate. So, you know, I could easily support the rest of your amendment because I think it is a good process. At this point I'm toying between whether I should offer an amendment to delete (a) or just quietly vote no on the rules change, but that provision where we say that a member of the Legislature cannot introduce legislation that that member feels is appropriate causes me a great deal of difficulty. I think it sets a precedent that we