

course, as we all know, did not have the opportunity to be voted upon, so we're back today bringing these bills or at least a couple of them this morning to you. This is what was known, last year, as amendment number 5. It is exactly the way that it was printed on many ballots, in fact those ballots actually delivered around the state, so a number of people have had the opportunity to look at them. I've not substantively changed anything, it should be the exact copy that was on the ballot last fall. This deals with Final Reading. You will not see a legion of lobbyists sending you in notes lobbying on this. You will not see tons of mail coming in from constituents on this. This is nothing more than, to me, a good government issue. Certainly, new senators who have not... Senator Maurstad, I don't know if you were down listening to rules before, you certainly have been down listening to Final Reading before and understand the process and the method that we go through in passing legislation, particularly in the final vote. As a matter of a little bit of history, I think it's probably appropriate for us to review that history, during our early days as a state Final Reading occurred at each stage of debate, we had the three stages of debate, each stage required it to be read verbatim and at large. Now I think it's probably a little bit lore and a little more tradition and some of the stories were that, gee, the reason that we read them was because senators couldn't read and they had to have it read to them. I don't believe that's probably the case. That might be a little more legend than it is fact. But the fact of the matter was there weren't a lot of copies of bills around. And the reason that you had a reading was that not everyone could sit and look at one copy, it was much easier for us to sit in our seats, not be moving around. You needed a period of time to appreciate what was being proposed to the Legislature, so they were read out loud. And during the process of legislation, of course, amendments were added, and before the vote was taken at each stage they were read out loud. That allowed everybody the opportunity to hear what was going on to make sure they understood or at least had the opportunity to understand what to do. And it was also good for people who would come down and watch the Legislature. They could hear verbatim what was going on. Today the circumstances are we have photocopiers, computers, we have hotlines. There's not a person in the world that doesn't have the opportunity to come and see a copy of a bill or of an amendment and try and decide what that really says and what's going on. Now, obviously, any one of us can choose not to do that. And there are days, obviously, where we wish we didn't have such a glut of