

required. And if anybody sees anything in the bill which they think improperly restricts an employer in maintaining a business operation, I would like to have that brought to my attention. And if I agree with you, I'll work with you to draft language and to get it adopted. And if I'm really convinced that the bill does impermissibly restrict what an employer is able to do and should be able to do, and we're unable to amend the bill, then I would try to help kill the bill. And I'm saying that because there are lobbyists working this bill. Some of them know me very well, and I think some of them have a bit of respect for my ability to work with my colleagues in the Legislature or by utilization of the rules to stop something if it shouldn't go. I don't see this bill as being of that nature. First of all, Senator Hall is one of our colleagues who is running this bill and nobody has ever been able to tell...and I'm not trying to cheese up to Senator Hall, so I hope you all understand what I'm getting at, to tell him, you've got to take this bill in this form and it can be passed only in this form. We have somebody with whom we can work, and that's why I'm continuing to support the bill in the form it has now. I thought that I might have to offer some amendments, so to keep my options open when we voted in committee I said I would review it. I have, and at this point, I don't see any impermissible restrictions placed on what an employer can do. But I want to say again, as I've said before, nothing in this bill, as far as I'm concerned, is designed to restrict the power of an employer to fire an employee for anything that that employer can fire the employee for now. I was talking to somebody but I heard Senator Hall mention being chronically tardy. A person cannot say, well, I was drinking and that's why I was chronically tardy so you're firing me for drinking. No, you're fired for being tardy. And a point that I had made when we were before the committee with one of the people representing business who opposed this was absences. I can bring a doctor's statement every time I'm absent and certify that I was really incapacitated for work and there may be no question about that. But when my absences reach the point that I can no longer function as an employee, I can be fired for excessive absence and being unable to do the job, even though I was sick and can certify it. So this bill is not changing any of those kind of prerogatives that an employer has. I support advancement of the bill and I hope we can move it. It's not being done on my part for the tobacco industry, the liquor industry or any other agency or group who make money that might be in favor of a bill like this. There are rights of individuals which are implicated