

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Yes, thank you, Madam President, members of the body, I'm just...I think we're probably about ready to vote on this but I was just wanting to check and see what kind of attendance we have this morning and so I'm going to talk for a little bit until I figure out whether we have enough people here. I guess I would like to just go back and talk a little bit about why you should support LR CA. There has been a lot of discussion about the constitutionality of the bifurcated system, but I guess I feel that it is a solution worth trying. The three things this bill does in a portion of it regarding the bifurcated system is it raises the percentage of registered voters necessary to gain ballot position. Second, it draws constitutional distinction between circulators who are paid agents for petition sponsors and those who fit the historic unpaid volunteer characterization. And, third, it offers an incentive for petition advocates to go the route of using unpaid volunteer circulators. It does this by saying that each signature obtained by an unpaid circulator counts double in reaching the threshold requirement for a successful petition. Now this is an approach that nobody else has tried yet. There are 22 states that allow petition initiatives. Nobody knows how to deal with this problem frankly since the Meyer decision, Meyer court decision out in Colorado that said you cannot make illegal the payment of circulators. But just because it hasn't been tried anywhere else there...doesn't mean it won't work. There obviously aren't any judicial readings at the state level or at the federal level on this initiative and opinions do differ about how the judges would react. Nevertheless, I think this is a solution worth trying and the beautiful thing about this is, because of the Warner idea and because of the Warner amendment we have a fall back position. We have a fall back position that would take us back to the pre- Dugan days under the Dierks portion of the bill. So I think that everybody can feel comfortable with the bill as it is now. First of all, neither plan under the bill raises the number of signatures needed for volunteer circulators according to pre- Dugan figures. They're the same as they were before, in fact, they're even a little bit less so everybody should feel comfortable with that. Secondly, the bill gives us a solution for solving a problem that many people feel will only get worse as time goes on. And, third, the bill really does try to encourage and foster volunteer petition drives. So I think the bill is in a shape that both supporters of LR 6CA and supporters of LR 22CA can support. With that, I would like to find my staff and I think I'll quit for right now. Thank you.