

SENATOR BEUTLER: ...less than theirs? I think we have more legitimate authority from the people of the state, and I don't see why the people of the state would not want us to exercise that authority on their behalf in order to offer them an additional alternative. I cannot see, with...what is wrong with alternatives coming from the chosen representatives of the people of the state.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Beutler. Senator Schimek.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Yes, Madam President, members of the body, Senator Beutler, I think you've raised some valid concerns here. And I don't disagree with your analysis that oftentimes the petition process does not allow enough opposing viewpoints to be heard when the original drafting is being done. And oftentimes the folks who do the petition don't put together good language, et cetera. I would say to you though that's what this bill is doing somewhat to correct, by at least having a Revisor of Statutes look at the language, and at least having some public input after the signatures are gathered. Now, as I mentioned earlier in the discussion, there was some idea among the task force that we should have that hearing before the signatures were even gathered. And that certainly is something that I think needs further consideration, because it would help, I think, assure that we have good language and good ideas on these ballot questions. But this, I don't think, is the right idea, your suggestion. I think it would be very frustrating to the petition...to the petitioners to have to wait a year after they had successfully completed a petition drive. In fact, it would probably be two years, actually, before the next election came up where they could actually put their ballot language on the ballot. I liked an idea that you had, I think it was maybe last year or the year before in Government Committee, which said that there should be another process by which petitioners can go out and maybe they only have to have 20,000 signatures initially to bring a ballot issue to the Legislature. At that point it can go before the Legislature, and if the Legislature likes the idea, incorporates it into some ballot language, maybe it wouldn't have to be exactly the same, but if the petitioners were satisfied with it, then that would be it, as I recall your bill, and you can correct me, but then if the Legislature did not adopt something, did not do something that the petitioners liked, then they could go ahead and gather the rest of the required number of signatures. To me that made a little bit more sense in terms of the initiative process. I mean I'm sure