

there are other ideas out there for some kind of an indirect petition process. I think this is an important issue that you've raised, and I think that it's a good discussion to have, but I just don't want to have it on this bill because, as we talked about earlier, if this amendment is adopted, this bill will probably be declared unconstitutional. So I would ask all of you in here to vote against this amendment with the understanding that it's an issue that we can come back and revisit. And I just wanted to get that on the record and say that I think that the timing here, as Senator Beutler said, is the problem. And it's not exactly the way he meant it, but the timing of having...

PRESIDENT ROBAK: One minute.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: ...a petition pro... a petition drive succeed and get the issue on the ballot, only to have it taken out of the hands of the petitioners and they are told that they would have to wait until the next election, for anything to happen, I think would be a mistake, and I would not want to see us adopt this amendment. Thank you.

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

SENATOR VRTISKA: Madam President, members of the body, I... this has certainly been interesting discussion we've been listening to this morning on this particular amendment. I think Senator Beutler has a good argument. But I guess one of the problems that I have is that...and of course, it's always good to have checks and balances, and I think probably that's what he's talking about. But it's kind of hard for me to understand how...whether it would be right for a committee of the Legislature to stall out the wishes of the public after they've gone through the process of gathering the number of signatures that they are required to get. It would seem to me that there would be a lot of dissension, a lot of dissatisfaction as we've heard in some of the other issues that have been surrounding this whole petition process. I listened to Senator Bromm's discussion a while ago, and it certainly made me think about what we probably ought to be dealing...spending a great deal more time on in this Legislature this year, and that's in trying to deal with the property tax issue. I know that has nothing to do with this particular argument, but at the same time I guess it does to the standpoint that if we don't take some serious...make some serious discussion regarding the property