

Constitution mangled and mutilated. Alexander Hamilton said, about the people, this is a paraphrase, the people are a great beast, bridled, saddled and waiting to be ridden, and that's the truth. There are too many times when we pretend that the public knows so much that we have confidence in their judgment, too many times I hear the hackneyed phrase, the American people, and I don't even know what they're talking about or who they're talking about, and the one speaking never clarifies. But those kind of slogans make it possible to make it seem that something profound is being said when there is not even an assertion made, there certainly is no argument, and very seldom are facts marshaled to support the position that the speaker wants adopted by simply saying the people say, the American people. I get so sick of hearing them say that at the congressional level, and it's starting to filter down to this level now. People stand on this floor and say the people have spoken. In this proposal that Senator Beutler is offering, there could be some protection against hasty, ill-conceived, ill-advised amending of the Constitution. But the fact is that what is in the Constitution, whether we like it or not, does have to be respected. The Constitution provides for the rights of initiative and referendum, we're talking about initiative now, if I understand it correctly, whereby the people can bring any crackbrained, silly, stupid, contradictory, foolish idea they choose, as they did with the term limits proposal, and it received enough votes. Either that constitutional guarantee means something, or it does not. If it means something, what it means is that the people are given the right, under the Constitution, to be as stupid, as perverse, as ill-advised, as corrupt as they choose in bringing a proposition before the rest of "the people" to see if enough of them will agree to put it on the ballot. And if enough sign a petition to do that, then they try to get enough to agree to add it to the Constitution. Unless a provision was put in the Constitution that made the change that Senator Beutler is suggesting, I could not support what he is offering. A statute cannot override the Constitution. There might be debates as to whether or not this provision is constitutional, but I don't think that it is. And I don't think it's good policy. The Legislature's job is to represent the people to try to protect the interests of the people as much as is possible. When we're voting on bills that we have before us,...

PRESIDENT ROBAK: One minute.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: ...we're allowed to substitute our judgment