

serious impassioned plea for a bill and I think the motion should be taken seriously and I would hope if there are reasons to not bring this out, we'd hear those. And, for that reason, I'm going to ask you to respond to an argument that I hear brought up about this measure and then give the rest of my time to you to do that. The argument that I hear and the concern, frankly, that I had last year with the bill that you had isn't whether or not there is, in fact, discrimination against individuals based on sexual orientation, we know that there is and I think most fair-minded individuals would like to see that not take place. The concern I heard from people in the business community, particularly small businesses, people that I work with, involves...they have the concern now that there are so many items that they have to comply with, so many concerns that they have when they interview an individual and they don't hire an individual, will they be subject to a discrimination lawsuit. But this puts one more obstacle in their way, one more concern in their way that they have to address. I know that's an argument that you have heard and I assume you have a response to it. If you've already responded, I apologize for asking you to respond to it again, but if you would briefly respond or as much time as you want to take to respond to that argument, I give you the rest of my time.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Senator Chambers, you have three minutes.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Senator Withem. Madam President, members of the Legislature, before I launch into the answer, I want to especially thank Senator Withem for his comments because I'm as serious as a heart attack about this measure and we will note that most of the senators have taken a walk. They have issues which don't play well in my district, but I never take a walk and they will come to me and say, Ernie, I need your help, I need you to speak and I'm there, not as a quid pro quo, but because it's right and they know that I'll do what I think is right even though it is unpopular and sometimes angrily opposed in my district. But in this instance what we're saying is that unless a person is discriminated against in terms of being given an interview, being hired, or whatever, based on sexual orientation, the existing law relative to an employer being able to do whatever he or she in best judgment thinks is appropriate would remain intact. If an employer did not want to even tread on dangerous ground, he or she would not have to ask in interviews what is your sexual orientation or make that apply to any aspects of the work being done by that company. As the bill