

how much time is spent on any particular petition drive, or we got petitions going on petitions. I mean right now as I understand the situation you could say I want on the ballot in the year 2000 something and start collecting signatures right now and just take whatever time you need to reach the goal. It could...I mean doesn't it make some sense to have some restriction? I mean at least consideration of that makes a lot of sense to me. So if we're going to talk about a higher level of signatures we ought to at least consider and adopt something at a...in terms of a time limit.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Wesely. Senator Chambers, followed by Senators Bernard-Stevens and Hall.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, up till now I've stayed out of this debate. On General File I left it alone, on Select File I left it alone until something came up this morning that I could not turn away from, and that was Senator Dierks' amendment, and I appreciate the fact that he withdrew it. And I stated in the beginning that I understand why he offered it. So that is behind us now. But the process is important to me. The constitution is important to me. And when people stand on this floor and say it's punitive to protect our process in the constitution because some people got petitions out there, that's the most nonsensical argument I've ever heard, it has no merit whatsoever. We don't owe anything to people who are circulating petitions when we are looking at trying to ensure the integrity of the process and thereby protect the constitution. If I hear that argument, I'm going to ask whoever makes it to stand up and tell me where in the law in the constitution they see where we've got to reduce the requirements for amending the constitution 'cause somebody is out there trying to amend it and it should be easy for them. That is silly. And the reason I speak so strongly, because the constitution needs some protection and it should be protected by those who understand the nature of the document. And there are people on this floor who do understand it and they are not speaking from that point of understanding. They're talking about things that have no bearing whatsoever on the job that we are to do here. If there are 1,000 petitions out there, and if we agree with 1,000 of them that is not a basis to compromise the integrity of the process. There were discussions on General File and comments to the same effect on Select File with reference to the types of procedures that are available now, along with technology and money to make it easier to acquire