

it's important, it should be important for a period of time so we're convinced over a long period of time it's what we want to do. But the way it is now it is so easy to get something on the ballot, and it's so easy to get something passed, and those in the back of the Rotunda will be saying, oh no, it's not easy. You go back to the last petition drive and it took less than two months. If that's what you want, if you want a constitution that is almost as porous as statutory law where on the whims of any day, or the whims of any group, at some point as a thing on the ballot and it can be voted on, if that's the type of, quote, sacred document you want, then you want to vote these amendments down. But it's time to put a stop to this type of argument that we're just for trying to make it easier for the people of Nebraska. If you talk to the people of Nebraska, they say their constitution is sacred, and yes, they want to have the petition process, yes, they want the referendum process, yes, they want the constitutional process that we have, but even they will say it does not, except for one group, the public out there will say it shouldn't be that easy to change. All this amendment does, it doesn't change the number of signatures required, it doesn't change the process at all, it says there needs to be a close at the end of the time period. Six months, I think, was unreasonable, but a year is a reasonable amount of time when you're looking at state issues on state constitutional issues. And they...and somebody may start a petition drive and fail the first year. Does that mean they can't start another petition drive? No, and they may, in fact, do the second petition drive, and they may fail, but they may get closer. And they may try again and they may fail, but they may get closer. And what that is, is a dialogue of the public on an issue on a sacred document. And at some point in time if the issue lasts, if the issue stays in the psychic (sic) of the Nebraska mindset, if that issue is so strong over the period of time, it may in fact then pass. Is that a long process? You bet it is. Is it an arduous process? You bet it is. Is it a process that we need to have because we're talking about our constitutional ethics and law? You bet it is. One year makes sense, it makes sense for all sides and I urge the adoption of the amendment.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Bernard-Stevens. We are now discussing the Bernard-Stevens amendment. Senator Hall.

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Mr. President and members. I rise in opposition to Senator Bernard-Stevens' amendment. The Wesley amendment of six months is a reasonable standard, and I believe