

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Yes, Madam President, members of the body, I rise in opposition, of course, to the Dierks amendment and for all the reasons I think that Senator Warner has so succinctly outlined. I do think that this isn't an issue that is of importance, that there are other people watching what we do and I think that it will provide a solution for a lot of states if we are successful. I think it will also provide a solution for Nebraska if we are successful. One of the things that I have heard people argue in support of this particular amendment is that it would take things back to the way they were. And I would submit to you that LR 6CA does take things back to the way they were basically for the volunteer circulator and I know Senator Janssen and I had a discussion on this earlier and I told him that the numbers were virtually the same as they were before the Dugan case came down and, Senator Janssen, if you would follow along, the part of LR 6CA that was the original Dierks bill now sets the figures for initiative for instance I believe it's 57,000. That's for a constitutional amendment. For the volunteer circulator under the Schimek portion of the bill, the bifurcated system, the signature number is 55,159, very close, both figures, to what it was before. And so I don't see any possible way that a petition circulator could be harmed even with some uncertainty out there as to what the court will do because the numbers are going to be the same under both systems. In addition to that, one of the things that I argued for strongly was that we base it on registered voters and the committee chose through the committee amendments to take it back to those who voted in the gubernatorial election. And you know, I don't have any real problem with that. I think the registered voters is a more stable number and is more reflective of the people who actually voted, or who actually participate in the political process, but what it comes down to in the end are numbers. So I can't see that for the volunteer circulator that we have really done anything which would be harmful. What we have done, of course, is in essence change things for the paid circulator and I think that was the intent that we started with and what we all wanted to accomplish. I don't think that Senator Beutler's amendment or Senator Dierks' amendment, sorry now, does for us anything except add uncertainty for four years and as Senator Warner suggested, you could see people coming in here and starting a paid drive to undo it because of the fear that special interest groups may have that this will happen in other states and not just Nebraska. So I would caution you very strongly not to support the Dierks amendment. I do think that