

be in a mass confusion for a long period of time. The way the bill is now...

SENATOR CROSBY: One minute.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: ...without the Dierks amendment, we put before the public a very simple statement. We've got a bifurcated system between paid and volunteer petitioners. We think that's a policy decision that needs to be made. What do you, the public, think, and once that is decided there would be a court case I am sure and we would then definitively know and if it is unconstitutional, we're covered because we'll go back to the Dierks way of doing things with the higher numbers. But to accept the Dierks amendment is to put the state, in my opinion, in at least four years of turmoil over this issue. The people deserve better, we deserve to have a better policy than that. I strongly oppose the Dierks amendment and my assumption is if the Dierks amendment goes, my sense is the bill doesn't go and then you're going to be at higher numbers even yet. And if that's the game you want to play, fine, I'm willing to play...

SENATOR CROSBY: Time.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: ...because I believe the numbers should be as high as they are now. I think they should be higher than they are now. I think the process should be tougher than it is now.

SENATOR CROSBY: Time.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: And I'd be more than willing to stay with the numbers that we actually have rather than see the bill go on with the Dierks amendment.

SENATOR CROSBY: Time. Thank you, Senator Bernard-Stevens. Before we continue, Senator Hartnett has in the south balcony as his guests today, 49 eighth graders who are members of the National Junior Honor Society from the Mission Middle School in Bellevue and their teacher is with them. Would you all please stand and be welcomed by your Legislature. Thank you for being here. Senator Dierks.

SENATOR DIERKS: Thank you, Madam President and members of the body, I will stand in opposition to Senator Hall's amendment. I'd like to say again for the third time that we are not asking