

initiatives that propose to change the Constitution. If they are initiatives with respect to the statutes, or referendums with respect to the statutes, the four-month period would continue to apply. But with respect, after January 2nd, '99, with respect to initiatives involving constitutional changes, the requirement would be nine months. And the reason for that, as we discussed on LR 6, is to provide what I think is going to be possibly the only real balancing mechanism that we can add to the whole initiative and referendum process that may make a lot of sense in the future. Especially if the court strikes down the two-tier system, we are going to be in a quandary as to how to give this system balance. So what this amendment is designed to do and what it, in fact, does is to be sure that while the Legislature is in session we have an opportunity to see what it is that will be put to the people in the fall, and that we have the opportunity to present, if we choose to do so, alternative propositions; that if the Legislature feels they could be better drawn or more rationally drawn or more broadly drawn, they would have the opportunity to do so. I feel very strongly that this kind of a mechanism provides a great advantage to the people of the State of Nebraska in that it does nothing more than offer them an alternative, and enhances, in fact, enhances the process by virtue of offering them alternatives in those situations where the philosophy of any particular initiative may be very narrowly drawn, or confusedly drawn, or drawn with a hidden agenda in mind. The criticism of this particular item on...as it was presented in the debate on LR 6, was that it would cut down on the number of months that you had to circulate a petition. And, in fact, I have passed out a chart for you to look at. The time for circulating a petition would be contracted from 20 months to 15 months, but I think if you look on this chart and consider what has been done across the country, and in particular in those states which allow for direct initiatives, as we do, that you will see that it is not at all an unreasonable time period to have in order to circulate a petition. What the chart shows you, if you will take a look at it, is that of the 50 states, there are only 16 that allow initiatives to change their Constitutions, so we start from the very...at the very beginning from the premise that we are one of the states that give the most weight to the people in terms of allowing the people to be lawmakers, to have equal status with the Legislature. Okay, we're one of 16 states that allows that. Now within those 16 states, let's assume for the moment that we adopt the amendment, and our circulation period becomes 15 months, then, in that case, as you can see, I've underlined