

those circulation times in the other 16 states, which would still be less than the 15 months. There would be about half of them that we would still be allowing a longer circulation time, even with our 15 months, than they currently have. And as you can see, there are three or four that are longer and two that we were unable to ascertain exactly how it worked, at least in the short time period that we had to do this chart. So that, if you look at all 50 states, even with this amendment, we are in the top seven states in the nation in terms of liberality with respect to the initiative and referendum process, both with regard to having it and with regard to the circulation time that is allowed. So I think that the amendment is in no way radical. I think it in no way takes away from the process. I think it facilitates the process and assists the process because, to me, facilitating the process means getting the most reasonable proposition or propositions to the people, allowing the people to vote in the most intelligent setting that we can present to the people, and I think what you would be doing with this amendment and opening up the opportunity to the Legislature to present additional material to the people does nothing other than facilitate the process. Thank you.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Beutler. Senator Dierks, followed by Senator Chambers and Schimek.

SENATOR DIERKS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members of the body. I will stand in opposition, of course, to this amendment. I am always surprised, I think, with the verbiage sometimes we use when we talk about balancing things. I fail to see where the balancing is particularly needed and the support that Senator Beutler hands out here with the chart showing other states and their rules and regulations holds little credence, I believe, when we think about the fact that we are a Unicameral and those other states are all bicamerals, and we have a little bit different sort of a setup here, and I think that if you go back and take a good look at the language in our Constitution, what you are doing is fooling with the first order of the rights of the people. And I think we need not do this sort of thing, that the balance that Senator Beutler talks about is already there, and we don't need to try to make any adjustments in it. Thank you.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Would like to recognize some guests of the Legislature. Senator McKenzie has 25 third and fourth graders from Nebraska Christian School in Central City, with their