

a chart in front of you which compares the green copy of the bill, the committee amendment and AM1456, the compromise amendment which is before the body now. As you can see, LB 418 proposed to increase the rate from 37 cents to 46 cents per line. The bill also dropped the conversion charts used by newspapers and provided for annual adjustments in the rates by the Executive Branch. A final element of the original bill was granting of negotiation authority to political subdivisions and newspapers to reach agreement on rates other than those in statute. Local subdivisions opposed the bill in its original form and, thus, the committee amendment was developed. The committee amendment AM335 kept the 9-cent increase, eliminated the provision giving the Executive Branch authority to adjust the rates annually, restored the conversion table but retained the negotiation authority for political subdivisions and newspapers to reach agreement on rates other than those in statutes. After taking the bill as my priority and reviewing the committee amendment and the positions of the parties involved with the bill, I found that there were those who were still not completely satisfied with the bill. All interested parties continued to work on their differences and further compromise resulted in the amendment which is now before the body. The right-hand column of the chart handed out outlines the amendment 1456. AM1456 staggers the increase over two years and reduces the total amount of the increase from 9 cents to 8 cents. This September, the rate increases from 37 cents to 41 cents, and in the September of 1996 the rate increases from 41 cents to 45 cents. The amendment, like the current statute, includes a conversion table for each rate change but does not include the negotiation authority provision. I urge the body to adopt AM1456 which will then become the committee amendment and therefore become the bill. I would be happy to answer any questions about the bill, about the importance of newspapers in our communities and about the government's duty to provide citizens with a timely public notice and with that, Mr. President, if I have any time left I'd be more than happy to yield it back to Senator Kristensen and I appreciate his letting me open on the amendment.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS PRESIDING

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Senator Maurstad. Senator Kristensen, there are about three and a half minutes left.

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the