

SENATOR DIERKS: Thank you, Mr. President. I thought that I had taken my light off and put it on again. I was ready to call the question but I think we need some more discussion so I will pass until we get to that point.

SENATOR WILL: Thank you, Senator Dierks. You were quicker on the trigger than I thought. Senator Maurstad, you are recognized.

SENATOR MAURSTAD: Thank you, Mr. President. I want to...I want to make sure everybody understands because I think I have an unusual position on this particular vote, I want to make sure everybody understands it so that nobody feels deceived later. I agree with what Senator Beutler has articulated and some of what Senator Fisher has indicated. If this did something, I would leave it in the bill but I don't think it does...I don't think it does anything. If, in fact, we were going to cap at all, I'll call it, no pun intended, then I would support that. The reason why I'm not sup...the reason why I'm supporting Dierks taking this out is because I think, as I indicated before, hoax might be a little bit of a strong word, symbolic is probably a more appropriate word. But I think we need to get past symbols and...if we're going to reform the system. So I don't want any misunderstanding relative to why I'm voting the way I am on this position. Obviously, I just made people on both sides unhappy with my vote and that's fine, but I didn't...I just want to make sure that people understand. I agree with Senator Beutler, with what he said, and if leaving this in the bill would advance that argument, I would support leaving it in the bill. I don't believe it does. I don't believe it indicates what the people want, and, as a result, I want to support the Dierks amendment. Thank you.

SENATOR WILL: Thank you, Senator Maurstad. Senator Bernard-Stevens.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Mr. President, and members of the body, just rise to make a couple of comments in far less than what the five minutes will need. Senator Fisher, I just did some quick calculation on 55,000 a year, assuming a million and a half people and assuming only a 100...or 500,000 of those million and a half were actually paying taxes, that would be about 11 cents a year. I think my kids, no matter what their lifestyle, probably will be able to afford that. In fact, I hope I raised them in such a way that they will want to do that.