

Senator Lindsay to open on the amendment

SENATOR LINDSAY: There is, thank you, Mr. President and members, this AM is...there is still a couple of changes to it that are up in Bill Drafting, should be down, and would substitute a copy and send it around at that time. The intent of this is to get to some issues, first of all, there is some E & R type of change that are...that, I guess, suggested by E & R but are those ones where they say to do it on the floor instead of just doing it as E & R amendments, and then there are some other changes that bring out what I believe are in talking to several members who had concerns with certain portions of the bill to allow the Legislature to vote on the pieces of the bill, itself. When we are in the...when we get into the debate on the bill, or, excuse me, when we get into the debate and go to the amendments, a lot of those amendments or most of those amendments add additional language to the bill, basically add other bills that have been heard by Judiciary Committee or other committees into this bill. What...what this amendment does is it pulls out that language or several pieces of the puzzle, several pieces of this crime bill that...it is a broad bill and it encompasses a lot of territory, and there are decisions in there that this body ought to make a decision on. For example, drug-free school zones is a portion of the bill. Some of you have mentioned to me that that's a provision that you may or may not be comfortable with, and so what I've done is filed an amendment or I mean part of this amendment includes striking the drug-free school zones. I intend to vote against that, that part of it, and it will be divided to put that issue squarely before you. I intend to vote against that, but if this Legislature says that you should vote for that, then I...I mean that is something I can live with. But that is an issue, for example, that ought to be voted on, it's a part of the bill that if we didn't...if we didn't have a lot of add-on amendments that are going to add things to the bill, that we could vote on those different pieces of the bill. This allows, by doing this, this allows us to do it. Other areas of that, or of the new amendment includes, if I can back up, on the question on use of a weapon by a felon. When we drafted this, I think we, frankly, probably put in the wrong section when we initially drafted it, but what we have is on possession of a firearm by a felon under the bill, we will increase that from a Class IV, it goes up to a Class ID. The use of a weapon by a felon is also a ID, so that is an example of where we need to look at it, and, at least, allow the Legislature to vote on it because there is no