

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Witek.

SENATOR WITEK: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I hate to start the year off agreeing somewhat with Senator Chambers, because I know it disconcerts everybody. But I do agree with him on his earlier, when he was talking, comments on the bill itself. I would not have voted for his amendment. But when he was making reference to the bill itself and the committee amendment and the reasons for the bill, I would agree with him on all of his comments. And I was...I was kind of surprised that this was our first bill up this year, because I thought this was somewhat controversial an issue. Although, I guess, Senator Withem, in his wisdom, is getting us used to these things early, knowing that this is going to be a tough year, so starting us on this bill would be one way to do so. My amendment would strike Section 21 of the committee amendments. And in the original committee amendments, it's on page 28 and 29. And what they have done is allowed the Governor to appoint all members within 45 days after the operative date of this act, and I believe there is an emergency clause on this bill. For the initial members two shall serve terms of one-year, two shall serve terms of two-years, and three shall serve terms of three-years. So by doing so they allow this Governor to completely eliminate the Equal Opportunity Commission in its present form, and appoint an entirely new commission within 45 days. It's one part of the bill that I found particularly interesting since I believe this Governor has appointed most, if not all of the people on the commission during his five-year tenure. So, obviously, he's having some problems with his own appointees. And I believe part of that problem might stem from my belief that he is not...these members are maybe not being as controllable as this Governor would like them to be, and so he would like to just put some legislation through this body and show that he can do it and get rid of the ones that he wants to get rid of instead of waiting for their term to be up and then have his appointments or allow that to be maybe someone else. I found it a particularly disconcerting segment because it shows kind of a raw power in a politician. And it's very disturbing to see that in our Governor because, as Senator Chambers pointed out, this whole bill is disturbing because it kind of puts a lot of power in a political area of our government, a power that to me could potentially do damage to businesses, could do damage to individuals, could be used as a tool or some kind of a striking tool for a politician, should they want to do so. And the fact