

January 10, 1996

SENATOR CROSBY: Senator Maurstad? Your time is up, Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Oh.

SENATOR CROSBY: Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Madam Speaker, members of the Legislature, I think one thing that it may make some sense to talk about is order versus chaos, I guess, and minority rights and how it all fits together and how it's all supposed to fit together under our structure of government, and I think the concern in that regard is very misplaced in the sense of it being an important part of this particular debate. First of all, with respect to every institution obviously there has to be a way of solving problems, a way of getting to, in orderly fashion, those things that are considered by folks to be most important. The need for order is paramount and is an absolute prerequisite to orderly democratic government. Also important is the protection of minority rights. But in our system of government the protection of minority rights, the protection of specific rights, whether they're minority rights or anybody's rights, is done by the constitution. It's done by the constitution of the federal government which pertains to us all no matter what we do. The Bill of Rights in the constitution protects everybody's right to free speech and a whole number of other issues as you all know. Not only does the federal constitution protect rights but the state constitution has its separate provisions which protect our individual rights. So nothing this legislative body can do, we can't do anything that's in contravention of the rights that are protected by either the state constitution or the federal constitution. Therein lies the main protection. Minority rights are also protected by just the general education and sensitivity of people and sense of fairness, and the sense of fairness in process beyond the constitution, giving everybody a right to participate on an even basis, a right to speak, a right to act in committee. Everything in our legislative process is, I think, sensitive in form and gives everybody the right to participate, but in the end there has to be an orderly process. You cannot go through this process year after year with not just the sense of impending chaos every session but with the actual fact of impending chaos a possibility. You and I all know that our rules are so liberal and so loose that any one or two or if three individuals decided to put a stop to the process it could