

January 17, 1996

and I'll vote for the motion to reconsider so that I hopefully can again vote for his amendment to the amendment. I really had trouble understanding, despite the proponent's statements, why this proposal is even being brought to us. I don't see that it does a whole lot and don't believe it will accomplish what they're indicating to you it will and does carry with it the hazard of focusing power in this body in one individual in a manner that I find unsatisfactory. I don't think the rule change, even if it's adopted, will do what the proponents say, because I think I heard one of them note that the Speaker would not have the authority to regulate or order amendments to the amendment. And so presumably there is still going to be what they've derided as a race to the Clerk's desk with amendments to amendments. And we'll spend as much time on amendments to the amendments as we used to spend on amendments to the main bill. It doesn't make any difference. What does seem to me to make a difference in this whole issue is the will of this body and the way that we can express that and finally make decisions. I think there are existing rules that will help us do that, if we employ them, and will allow proponents to get their amendments up if they think they're important, if they think they're substantive. But they may have to think about how to do it. And, for shame, that we should have to think about how to do something rather than letting somebody else decide it for us. Now I won't claim to be a great user or expert in the rules, but if I want to do something I'm willing to think about how to do it, and maybe I'll be able to find a way through our rule structure now. And if I have thought about it long enough in advance, I won't have to be involved in a big race to the Clerk's desk. I'll have prepared my amendments, I'll have thought about what I'm going to do, and then hopefully get to do it. That's the kind of discipline that I would rather see us employ, a discipline for ourselves. Each of us as individuals think about what we want to do, think about how we can do it within the structure of the rules and then attempt it, rather than handing some authority to any individual that we might later regret handing off. So I will vote to reconsider and, hopefully, have a chance to vote for Senator Bernard-Stevens' amendment to the amendment. I think it makes sense. If that amendment is adopted the rest of it is probably innocuous. I don't know whether I'd vote for it or not. But I don't think we want to adopt the rule in the fashion it is now. Thank you.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Lynch.