

January 17, 1996

Senator Chambers on a filibuster, or Senator Dierks on a filibuster, or Senator Crosby on a filibuster, or Senator Schimek when she was involved in filibustering on an abortion bill years ago, if you were really serious you'd say that we've got twelve hours on this level of debate and we're going to get in here at seven o'clock in the morning and we're going to make them stay on the floor and we're going to make them talk the whole time, we're going to make them do the...we're going to make them so darn tired that they'll be begging for twelve hours to come. And Senator Chambers will say, I'm up for the task. But you know what, Senator Chambers is getting older in his age and at the end of the year, even he gets a little tired. But if you would stay in the session until eleven o'clock on a day, you could defeat a delay motion in one day. One day you could do it. We could today if you wanted to. Come back after the committees are over and finish this and get it up for cloture today, we could do it. But we don't want to. The problem isn't in our rules. We did the dilatory rule so we'd stop all the amendments that were silly and we could really get the important issue. Wasn't used once. Not once. We had a cloture rule adopted so we would stop all of the filibustering. And since the cloture rule, we've had ten times more filibusters. You know why? Because it's easy now. It's a piece of cake to filibuster. In the old days, and I...that's sad for me, the Clerk reminds me that I'm middle aged now so I have to talk about in the old days. When I came nine years ago, if you were going to filibuster you had to do it and be willing to do it for the entire session. Every day you had to get up and say, I've got to keep this debate going the entire day because once I lose control, it's gone. But now, with the cloture rule, anybody can do it for twelve hours. It's a piece of cake because you start at 9:00, not at 7:00, we start at 9:00, by the time we get checked in it's 9:15, 9:20, and then by the time we get through with our preliminary things and our little resolutions we do it's 9:30, quarter to ten. And then we have two hours, about, and fifteen minutes that you...all you have to do is talk for that, and you can do that for three days. It's nuts. And all of the rules we have done fail because it's us. Now if the committee chairmen are having difficulties...

SPEAKER WITHEM: One minute.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: ...on their bills when they get up or a senator has a difficulty with getting their bill up for