

January 17, 1996

(See page 454 of the Legislative Journal.)

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Withem, to open on your amendment.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Yes, Mr. President, members of the body, I'm offering this amendment, which in effect would strike the ex...portions of the pending amendment entirely and insert the following new language. We would go then to, we would no longer have an amendment to the rules up here that would empower the Speaker any more than the Speaker is already empowered under the current rules. The Speaker would not have this additional authority. What we would be doing would be we would be amending Rule 7, Section 11, Motions and Amendments for Dilatory Purposes. We would be, in essence, empowering the rest of the body because there appears to be a very legitimate difference of opinion. I believe both times that the Bernard-Stevens amendment has been before us, both in its original form and in its attempt to be brought back to life through reconsideration, it's received.. what was it, 23 votes both times, I think, which, which...and I don't know if he would agree with this characterization. I do, I think that the...had that amendment been adopted they...there would have been, you know, nothing other than some additional language added to the rules, but no additional power because we've already dealt with the...the scheduling and the committee requirements. The Speaker would be able to name five bills as super priority bills, but wouldn't be able to do anything with them had that amendment been adopted. And both times, 23 of the 49 members felt as though they wanted to strike that provision that gave...that gives a life to the Rules Committee recommendation from it. So I'm wondering, and we've been on this for any number of days now...I'm wondering if the body does not need an alternative set before it, and that's what I'm attempting to do, set forth an alternative that would not empower the Speaker, but in essence would empower individual members of the body to use a rule that currently is only in the hands of one individual, and that individual is whoever the principal introducer of a measure happens to be, the principal introducer of the measure that's before the body at a time. If you remember last year, we had one of these debates, a lot of the same rhetoric was...and, no, I shouldn't use the word rhetoric, because that sounds like I'm trivializing what was said. A lot of the same language and arguments were used that we're hearing today about the ability of the body to move its