

Legislature, this deals with the question of the December meeting amendment that the committee has added to the bill. One of the concerns I had with the original proposal that this is being amended into, well the 75 days, is the same question that Senator Warner and others have raised about we aren't able to do our work now, how can we cut 15 days off from a long session. And the response was to put this language in here from the constitutional amendment that I introduced that will save us time by having the December meeting date. I think everybody recognizes we basically throw ten days away at the start of any long session as we introduce bills. The key is, for me, is that...we lose 15 days overall, but do we still come out ahead or not ahead? And what this amendment does is say that opening session in December will not count on the 75 days. The 75 days would be the session time that would follow in January, after we meet in December, so that we have a little more flexibility to recognize that we'll save some time, but I don't think we're going to save adequately 15 days of time to be able to cut those off at the other end. And let me... So that's what the amendment does, essentially. It designates it 75 days, it keeps that, but makes it apply to the time after we come back in January. Now let me take a few moments to go over the concept of December meeting time and why that's an idea that I think we should adopt in this Legislature. This proposal, and I have passed out for you on a blue sheet, has a history. It was looked at for many years, 1975 it was on the ballot and got 47 percent of the vote. So it came very close to passing in 1975. Ten years later, 1985, I introduced the constitutional amendment again and it was placed on the ballot for 1986. There it lost with 49.4 percent to 50.5 percent. In other words, by basically a little less than 1 percent difference we would have had, ten years ago, a start of the session, 90 days, in December. I argue that the timing couldn't have been worse on putting that issue on the ballot in 1986. That was the year that we had LB 662 and the school consolidation and the seat belts, and everybody was mad and they wanted to overturn and repeal those issues. So, basically, everybody was voting against anything that was on the ballot. And yet we still were able to get just short of 50 percent and almost passed this proposal to meet in December. So I think the public, in a different timing on that, would support the change to December. I think they recognize the validity and what would happen in terms of an advantage to the Legislature. And let me just take a few minutes to go over why I think that is the case. Those of