

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Senator Brown.

SENATOR BROWN: Yes, yes.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you. Members of the Legislature, I am not willing to go along with that idea. I hear discussions about the federal government preempting this and preempting that and some of the other arguments that are given. But frankly, I don't trust the Legislature to be strong enough to do the kind of things that are necessary to regulate these utilities in the areas where they still can be regulated. I had a tremendous amount of trouble from Sprint, the telephone operation, when they had stopped long distance calls, collect, from coming to my office. I worked through the Public Service Commission, and had I been blessed with more leisure time I would have collected some of the articles to document the kind of lies, outright lies that Sprint told as to why they had blocked incoming long distance collect calls on my line. They had said the bill had not been paid, which was untrue. They said that my phone number had belonged to somebody else who had not paid the bill, which was untrue because the number had been mine since Methuselah was three years old. Then they began to make up other excuses, such as a computer glitch someplace, but they couldn't explain where or when it had occurred. Finally, there was a hearing before the PSC because I insisted on it. And Sprint brought all these people who were supposed to be experts, and under my gentle cross-examining.... Realized this, I'm not a lawyer. I'm trained in the law, but I'm not licensed to practice the law. They had a highly trained, very skilled lawyer who was expert in communication matters, and I outperformed him. They had what was called a computer expert who was unable to answer questions. But when the whole thing was done it was found out, and Sprint had to acknowledge it, that they were wrong. Had the Public Service Commission not been available as an instrumentality through which this matter could have been resolved, perhaps I would have had to go to court, as I did against the mayor and the Police Chief of Omaha. But a person cannot do that in every case where there is a dispute. It's not even desirable in every instance. Because my time is running out this time I'm going to put on my light. But the main point I would like to make at this juncture is that to remove references to the Public Service Commission from the constitution would leave the consumers virtually naked. Those of you who are from rural areas have watched these bills roar through the Legislature which are