I'd rise to oppose the amendment for two or three reasons. I want to talk about the policy reasons for doing it first. Policy reason is this, in the...this bill only deals with county offices or counties themselves. It's the same basic issue that we've also had, which will be in subsequent legislation, where it talks about cooperative or consolidating the efforts on a county and city basis. And in all those the testimony was that there needed to be a process where citizens could initiate action, and it could either be in the initiative process, if the elected officials refused, for whatever reason, not to look at some of these alternatives. Under the process here the petition of 10 percent of the people who voted for Governor in the last election can request a county board to look at those process. The affected areas then or counties are to sit down and negotiate. Once they do that then the matter still goes back to a vote of the people involved in each of the respective counties, or within a county if that is the basis for the consolidation of offices. But in any event, this merely becomes an incentive, if you please, or more than that a strong directive to those who have those responsibilities, at least that's part of the duty of their office. And I would strongly oppose any suggestion to take away the threat of loss of office for failing to comply with what a petition of citizens duly signed by law requested them to look at. And this whole concept is to provide incentives, locally people would be provided with tools to try to make their government more cost-effective to restructure, not to Band-Aid, not to beat people over the heads, but yet sufficient amount of direction and incentives that there will be serious efforts made. And I would strongly oppose the proposed amendment as a weakening of that ability for local governments to look and solve problems themselves at the request of the people who live in the area.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Warner. Senator Kristensen.

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: Thank you, Madam President, members of the Legislature. I wanted to go back to...respond a little bit to what Senator Bernard-Stevens had said earlier. This standard doesn't inhibit or prohibit people from looking at a consolidation request and disagreeing with it. And what it does, I guess, is you're faced with a policy choice here of if the people are going to actually become involved with wanting to do some consolidation, how do you try to guarantee that their