

the ballot. That's not my concern. And even if we passed all of these packages, does that mean they're still not going to be on the ballot? They still could be on the ballot. They can still pass no matter what we do, whether we support the packages or not. The petition drive should have absolutely nothing to do with anyone's decision on these packages because in the bottom line we vote on what we believe to be the best policy. That's what we do. If the public does disagree with that and they go to a petition process, that is their opportunity and right as citizens and we then submit to that, to their right and we would abide by that. But to imply that we have to do these things because if we don't a petition may, in fact, pass and that'd be the worst, that's a bogus argument because, (A) if we pass this they can still put it on the ballot and it supersedes anything we can do, and if we don't pass it obviously they may or may not be successful at the ballot. The public has had many times voting on lower lids, 2 percent lids, and they overwhelming have said, no, we don't want to do those. I'm not convinced that the public, when they look at all ramifications what will happen, will actually support any of the petition processes out there. I'm not convinced of that. Am I convinced that these are good policies? I'm not convinced totally of that yet either, but I am going to make the decision based upon policy what I, as a senator, what I, as a representative, believe to be the best policy regardless of what anybody else outside of the...in the petition process thinks what their view is what good policy. That's not what I'm here for. The final thing I want to say is on the policy argument Senator Hilgert was correct, I think, if he was arguing, and I think he was arguing, that there are inequalities in the process we have now. We can't, as good policymakers, ignore the fact of what Senator Chambers and others have said. A lot of the little people are going to be hurt, and I'm not talking about the Auditor. I'm talking about small towns and villages and counties and school districts. A lot of the little people will be hurt and a lot of the more wealthy areas will not. And in your hearts you're going to have to look at that and say, do I want a North Platte school district to really have to cut back when somebody else is not going to have to...

SPEAKER WITHEM: One minute.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: ..cut back at all? Is that fair? And then if you come and say, well, the school districts can have a