

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Withem, members of the Legislature, this is an amendment that came out of the study process that was set in motion by the Revenue Committee, and was submitted earlier and there were suggestions made that maybe it was more sensible to do part of it now and part of it later. It has to do with drainage districts. You may recall that the committee had trouble getting a handle on drainage districts, how many there were, who they were, where they were, whether they were levying property taxes or not. Some of them, they had the authority to levy property taxes, some of them do, some of them don't, apparently. So the original amendment had two parts, one, a process by which we could identify all these districts and find out what kind of taxes they were levying, whether they were assessments or property taxes, ad valorem taxes; and the second part actually took away from drainage districts the ability to levy a property tax and suggested that they simply proceed on the method, on the special assessment method, all of them. Most of them apparently are doing it that way, although because we have sketchy information, it was un...we were uncertain in our knowledge. And so it was suggested that we do away, at this point in time, with the actual provision that took away from them the ability to levy ad valorem taxes and simply try to identify them at this point in time. And so the amendment that is in front of you now, that is on page 1404 of the Journal, simply requires them to report to the NRDs, and for the NRDs to make an effort to check with the tax...county treasurer to see which ones are levying ad valorem taxes, and, basically, a little process by which we can get information about what's going on with the drainage districts, and then in the next couple of years, if it seems to be appropriate, further tighten down the ability of this particular kind of district to levy property taxes, maybe switch them over to use special assessment, if the Legislature sees that as appropriate. That's the purpose of the amendment. Thank you.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Beutler. Senator Beutler, excuse me, Senator Warner, followed by Senator Robinson.

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I'd rise to support the amendment. I'd like to ask Senator Beutler a couple of questions first.