

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Madam President, members of the body. Senator Kristensen, while you're talking, I'm just going to ask a question and when you get a chance, if you can answer in a few minutes, that'd be fine. The question I'd like to know is on the five, the way the committee has it now, or way the Legislature has it now on Select File, is it the ability of the school board to put forth to the public that a levy will be increased or they would be able to increase by the vote of the board any period of time up to five years? So they could say, we're going to do this for one year, this will count for two years, or is it mandatory it has to be five?

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: No, it's up to five years.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Okay. So the same way with Senator Beutler's bill. I mean, it could be...it could be again two, three, five, up to ten?

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: Absolutely. And that's the argument that the people who wanted unlimited time said, look, let the locals decide the time.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Yeah. Thank you, Senator Kristensen. And with that, I rise to support the Beutler amendment, only because I agree with Senator Warner that five probably is a more...is a reasonable number that most people would, in fact, support if they are going to. A five-year commitment on a levy increase may...will be more popular, certainly, than a ten. But I do think that Senator Beutler is giving to local control, the local boards, at least a possibility, an option, if they want to try to push for something that's above five, if they want to try to push for a six-year commitment or a seven. You know, I would argue if you're getting close to ten, you should be doing a bond issue at some point anyway. But if they want to try to do so, it's their option to gauge what they feel the public will support, what they'll be able to politically do, what they think is good policy. And if they want to do more than five, I think that should be their option. We still have the cap at ten. So, with that, I don't expect many...many school districts would, in fact, go to that level, but if the school board wishes to try and wishes to do so, I think they certainly should have the ability to do so. And so I rise in support of the Beutler amendment.