

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office

March 3, 1999

LR 10

Wehrbein, precisely what would your amendment do?

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: My amendment, for conversation only, or for discussion, was to go from two years to three years instead of what the motion or the bill...the resolution says four years.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Okay...

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: And mine is primarily for discussion, although it's a valid...it was seriously discussed, that three years, back in the constitutional conventions.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Senator Wehrbein. I don't think that the constitution, in this regard, ought to be changed at all. When they were putting these two houses together, and maybe Squire Wehrbein mentioned this in his presentation, I have talked about it before. George Washington and maybe it was Alexander Hamilton, but they were discussing the relative roles or the respective roles of the Senate and the House. The House is designed to bring in the riffraff, the rabble rousers, those who don't have much in the way of intelligence, class, or any of those things that are desirable in an elected official. But since there are so many of those types of people, there ought to be some house in the national legislature where they could obtain representation. When the Senate was functioning in its early days...then I am going to get back to this conversation George Washington had...a person from England was sitting up in the balcony watching, and he made the observation that the U.S. Senate was designed to be a House of Lords but America had no lords for the purpose. Because those in the Senate were not of a much higher quality than those in the House. In the House, they used to rear back their seats and put their feet on the table. They whittled and carved sticks. They chewed tobacco and they spat it. They carried pistols, dueling swords, clubs, and just brought onto the floor of the House exactly what they were before they were elected to the House. But the privilege, if you will, the honor, if you will, of having someone bludgeoned into insensibility while sitting at his desk was reserved for the Senate. Preston Brooks (phonetic) took a heavy hickory club and bludgeoned Senator Sumner almost to death. Because the desks were fastened to the floor, although Sumner was a large strong man, his knees, his legs were under the desk,