

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

May 12, 1999

LB 729

initiative or referendum petition, you're rolling the dice and you may win and you may not. But when I look at what the Attorney...what the Secretary of State is supposed to determine, whether one of these proposals violates the U.S. Constitution or laws of the United States, you do not understand the full meaning of the constitution just by reading those words. There is a huge body of law based on federal court opinions, and all of those opinions are a part of the law, the decisions actually. The opinion is the rationale. Some courts will accept the rationale of an opinion, some others won't. But the decision is what is the law. And some decisions will expand the words in a constitution, others will come along and try to contract those words. But to just read the term "due process" does not tell you what due process means. And in fact, courts will say,...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: ...not only will no attempt be made to definitively declare what due process is, it would be impossible to do it. So it has to be done on a case-by-case basis, considering the circumstances in which that particular provision may come into play. So it's going to take more than a notion for the Secretary of State to determine a violation of the U.S. Constitution or U.S. laws. Some cases that are brought for that purpose require months. And I don't want to give that to the Secretary of State or any other executive officer.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Senator Schimek, on the Quandahl amendment.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Yes, thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. I would like to go back and just remind people that what this bill does is set up a situation in which the Secretary decides whether to file a particular constitutional amendment or not, and based on a number of factors. It is the court that actually decides, in the long run, if somebody wants to take that...his decision to court. But I would like to talk about the Attorney General's Opinion for just a little bit, because I don't...I don't know if it's a factor in anybody's thinking at this point or not, but it certainly could be. And I want to be on record as saying that I don't believe there is anything in the constitution that gives the AG authority to issue advisory