

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

February 3, 2000 LB 729

amendment, and I'm drafting it now. And what I think I will do is add a new subsection which would say that, if the Secretary of State accepts or refuses to accept for filing either of these types of petition, then all the Secretary of State will declare is that it is legally not sufficient, or I'll get the language to parallel that in the amendment, because I don't want the Secretary of State doing any of these kinds of things that have a bearing on the petition when the Secretary of State could be in error. The Secretary of State could be in error for refusing or for accepting. And these issues are always extremely political; they are usually divisive and sides are drawn up. Regardless of the fact that a court is not bound by anything the Secretary of State says or does, any comments by the Secretary of State are going to be used by either or both sides as a basis for either trying to get people to sign the petition or to get people to refrain from signing it, because the circulation of the petitions will continue while all of this legal back and forth is taking place. So I'm going to offer the amendment. And I see nothing that touches on separation of powers. The Secretary of State does what the Legislature affirmatively authorizes the Secretary of State to do. The Secretary of State might assume certain prerogatives, arguing that to carry out the explicit directive of the Legislature, certain things go along with that. I want to make it clear that in accepting or refusing a petition, in the context of this bill, which is setting up a procedure to challenge the Secretary of State's decision, all I want the Secretary of State to do is announce that decision; no memo arguing one way or the other or trying to make a point, just declare that it is not legally sufficient. And when I offer the amendment and we discuss it by itself, maybe everybody will disagree with what I'm talking about. But I do want that point to be in the record and to have been a part of the discussion, so that if you all pass this bill with Senator Schimek's amendment and a problem arises, because the Secretary of State goes too far in commenting on why he or she accepted or refused to accept a petition for filing, I will then say, I told you so, and I will add, but you all don't pay attention to me.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Senator Chambers, were you finished? Thank you, Senator Chambers. Senator Dierks, on the Schimek amendment.