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FLOOR DEBATE

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SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Brashear. Senator Landis on the motion to suspend.

SENATOR LANDIS: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, if you go to most legislatures with two houses, or if you go to the federal government and the Congress, you'll find a very, very large and usually multi-volume set of rules. And the reason is, the structure of most legislatures, certainly the federal government, is that the time does not belong to the individual members, that the time belongs to the Chair, and that you ask for a certain amount of time, and once that's been given to you, your rights are over; that in fact the distribution of deliberation is for the Chair. So you request from the Chair a certain amount of time. It's structured for debates between the majority and the minority, but in fact, you have no right to speak other than that which is granted to you by the Chair. And our rules are so simple because we work from the reverse. The reason our rule book is as short as it is, is because it starts from a completely different premise. It says the time is ours. As a deliberative body, as a one-house body, the time doesn't belong to the Chair; the time belongs to us, and that we simply ask for our turn to speak for an amount of time that is limited to three times per chance to argue on a particular amendment, but we have an unlimited right to make amendments. That's not true in the federal government. In fact, you have to ask for the number of amendments you may have for an issue. We have assumed a deliberative stance for the body, which is why our rules are so simple, in a way. They feel complex to us, but believe me, by comparison, they're not. They're very simple. It's also one of the reasons why the cloture rule, on its own, has not been particularly successful for those people who want to gavel down obstreperous minorities. And the reason is that there are other ways to lengthen debate, if you want to, than contesting the cloture rule. You know, if you really want to slow down debate on a particular bill, you don't have to do it on that bill. You don't have to file 15 amendments. You can start talking about the three bills before it. Cloture bill going to help you then? This change going to help you? No. And it's why it hasn't helped particularly over the last several years. The existence of the cloture rule itself, in part, has slowed the deliberative process because our relatively