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for absentee ballots. The bill has been amended by committee amendments. If you adopt those, it would restrict it down to one level of helping overseas ballots. I would agree with the committee amendments and that would be my opening.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Connealy. There are committee amendments, as stated by the Clerk. Senator Schimek, as chairperson of that committee, you're recognized to open on those amendments.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Yes, thank you, Mr. President and members. The committee amendment, as Senator Connealy suggested, really pares the bill down a bit, and the main provision left in the committee amendment allows the members of the armed forces and their spouses and citizens temporarily outside of the U.S. to receive an absentee ballot and vote by fax. But the ballot, the actual ballot, itself, would have to be returned by mail. The original bill suggested that we allow the ballot to be returned by fax and, frankly, I was uncomfortable with that. I think the committee was uncomfortable with that. You know, there's several ways that a voter can get a ballot in time. There is a Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot that has been authorized to provide an alternative for overseas voters, and to be eligible for this ballot, the voters have to make a timely application for that, but there is a lot of time allowed. In addition to that, the ballot only allows the voter for federal offices, and then an overseas voter who submits a Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot and later receives a state absentee ballot can actually vote the state ballot, too, as long as he lets the local election official know that he is voting two ballots. So I think the committee felt that by allowing the fax for the request and the absentee back, you cut a lot of time off the entire process that way. And then just to say that you have to mail back in the ballot leaves plenty of time. So without going into a lot more detail, Mr. President, I think I'll quit there, and then if anybody has any questions, I'll try to answer them. But that's the committee amendment.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Schimek. You heard the opening on committee amendments. Open for discussion, Senator Connealy.