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Schimek, followed by Senators Fischer, Smith, Redfield. Senator Schimek, on the Smith amendment.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Yes, thank you, Mr. President and members. I, too, would oppose the amendment. The committee did talk about this, and the committee did hear the testimony. And you know, there were some of us who really didn't want a waiting period. There are only six other states in the United States that are like Nebraska. We have the most restrictive kind of anti-felon voting law, I think, in the whole United States. But in the discussion, it was apparent that some people would feel more comfortable if we had a waiting period. And so after a lot of discussion, we decided on the two years, which takes you through one election cycle. It also gives that person an opportunity to get back into the community, to get their lives back on track, and then to apply to register to vote after that two-year period. I...we could argue, again, from here until the end of the session, about what that waiting period should be. I hope that you will trust the committee's instincts on this, and go with the two-year provision. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Schimek. Senator Fischer, on the Smith amendment.

SENATOR FISCHER: Mr. President, members of the body, I am a member of the Government Committee, and I voted against advancing this bill to the floor. When we had discussions on the waiting period, we were also provided with information on policy changes from other states. I would like to read some of those to you. I do not believe that Senator Smith's amendment is out of line. Until recently, Delaware imposed a lifetime voting ban for felons. In June of 2000, the General Assembly passed a constitutional amendment restoring voter rights to some ex-felons five years after the completion of their sentence. When it says "some ex-felons," I don't know if that means...obviously it doesn't mean all ex-felons. And there may be a distinction between nonviolent and violent. In Maryland, in 2002, the Legislature repealed its lifetime ban on two-time ex-felons, with the exception of felons with two violent convictions, and imposed a three-year waiting period after completion of sentence before rights can be restored. In