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SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Wehrbein. On with discussion of the Beutler amendment. Senator Beutler, followed by Senator Schimek. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature, I think Senator Schimek had a...had the impression that this particular amendment struck everything that we've put into the bill so far. And I want to reiterate that it does not; that everything that you put in the bill so far stays in place. And if it appears on the spring ballot, what I'm suggesting will appear on the fall ballot. And if it appears on the fall ballot because there are not 40 votes to put it on the spring ballot, then, in that case, this proposition will appear at the following general election; not the same general election, but the following general election. As far as ethics are concerned, I am not one that would ever assert that this place is second to any in terms of top quality ethics. I think we do, and over the years we've done extremely well in Nebraska in terms of ethics. But there is always the underlying suspicion in a democracy that our ethics are not what they should be, that they need to be watched constantly, that nowhere else is the salvation of the state in the watchfulness of the citizen more appropriate. And there's probably, in a general sense, a lot of truth to that. This is the body that needs to be sure it has its ethics in order. But in order for this amendment to be valid, it doesn't have to be true that the ethics of this place are bad. They're not bad. But that doesn't mean that the people wouldn't be that much more reassured if they didn't have an outside group kind of looking in and making suggestions and recommendations to us. It is, I think, a healthy interplay that would exist between this kind of commission and the legislative body. So I don't argue that we need this on the basis of our poor ethics. I just don't think that's true. But I think that it could be helpful and reassuring to people to know that we're willing to let a constitutionally constituted group look at our ethics. And part of the bargain with the people here is simply that. We open up the constitution to a commission group to look at our ethics and, in return, you the people allow this commission to also look at our pay. It is not trickery. It is not anything other than a bargain that makes sense, that makes perfect sense. The