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FLOOR DEBATE

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the railroad and the county and the state and everybody to agree to finally repair that bridge. I think the whole idea is, is the same thing that I have a concern with on the bill itself, is you're putting something into statute that says you will close these railroad crossings, and I question why that should be in statute. This is something that your local communities and the railroads have worked out ever since they've had railroads. This isn't something that really needs to be in statutes, I don't think. I think this is...we have to be very careful, because now you might say they're guilty and they have to prove that they're innocent. In other words, they're going to close a crossing, but you got to prove that you need it. It shouldn't be that way. It should be up to the railroads or someone to prove that that crossing doesn't have to be there. This gives more authority to a larger corporation. Some of your corporations, especially the Burlington Northern, are headquartered in Fort Worth, Texas, and what kind of a crossing that Senator Hudkins and her neighbors have over the railroad tracks in her district I think they couldn't care a hill of beans about; until it shows up on their bottom line, they're not interested. So I think we have to be very careful when we start putting out something in statutes that give people a great deal more power, you might say, than what is necessary. This is something the railroads have always worked out with local people and local communities. There's never been a problem that I've ever known about closing crossings or keeping them open, as long as you were negotiating with the railroads and the local communities. I've probably lived along a railroad track longer than anybody else in this Chamber, and I know what it's like to work closing crossings, to keep crossing open. I know why the railroads want to close crossings, because of the maintenance problems they have with them. So I certainly agree that there's crossings that need to be closed, but I don't think it should be in statutes that we have to close a crossing. I certainly oppose this bill. I don't think it's...that it isn't going to save any lives. You might say if someone is on one side of a railroad track, they got to get across to the other side. The question is, is how far are you going to make them drive to do that? My other question is, is...are the railroads out here to serve the country, or are we out here to serve the railroads? So I think the railroads have to take into consideration that