

Hall, would you like to proceed with your closing while they're coming in?

SENATOR HALL: Actually, Mr. President, I'd like to wait, but I won't, considering the time of day, even though I've never done that before, but I think this amendment is important enough to make sure that folks understand just what they're voting on. The arguments to it have been that this is a new concept that hasn't had a public hearing. We've adopted amendments to this bill that haven't had a public hearing to date because they have brought compromise and votes to the bill. This amendment that protects, for the most part, young people, paper carriers, has been deemed to be a barnacle on this bill. I would argue that that is, in fact, not the case. What we would do with this amendment I think is bring some justice to the current workmen's comp definition of employee or worker and it would cover those individuals who carry papers right now should they be injured on the job. It is not going to be something that is going to impact the work force. It's not going to drive the costs up. Very few times do these folks get hurt. I...they may not be indestructible, even though they may think they are, but from time to time they do get injured. Are they any less deserving of compensation for their injuries in performing tasks for their employers just because they happen to be 16 and delivering papers as opposed to 16 and working in a restaurant? You're 16 and you work in the restaurant and you cut your finger while you're making a salad you're going to be covered, but if you're delivering the newspaper and you're 16 and you get hit by a car you're not covered. Because of your choice of employment and you're injured, even though you don't understand the law at that young age, you have, in effect, made a choice because you've chosen or the Legislature has chosen for you through their public policy not to allow compensation for your disability and that is not good public policy. These individuals should not be exempted as they currently are. The case that I laid out for you is a clear example of that and I believe it's the proper course for this body to move. It is a public policy decision. It's not one that would impact this bill in any manner other than a positive one. Oh, there'd be a few newspaper people that would be upset about it, but I'd love to see them defend that argument that injured teenagers shouldn't be eligible to be compensated, the ones that work for them. If they work in a grocery store and they get hurt on the dock they're going to be covered. If they work in the theatre and they get hurt, if they get shot they might get compensated, as four of them did out in