

says with regard to honorarium there is no limitation, there simply has to be a reasonable relationship to the services rendered. And then it attempts to define honorarium better than it was previously defined, although I would be the first to admit it's an extremely difficult matter to define exactly. So I hope this is an improvement and a reasonable compromise that we can deal with. I will be very interested in the thoughts of the other members on this particular compromise. But I think it is a very reasonable compromise in the sense that we don't even know at this point how many members of this Legislature are taking honoraria and for what services and as time goes on with the reporting requirement we will get a picture of what's happening and then we can act accordingly. But, for right now, the rule would be left that they're there, you can take them but they have to bear a reasonable relationship to the services rendered. Somebody has to make that judgment as to what is reasonable, that's left with the Accountability Commission, as it has always been in their hands, and there will always be a matter of a judgment call. And I don't think that there is anything we can do with this law or with a number of other laws that we deal with in this area that precludes at least some judgment being exercised by somebody. So that's what the amendment does and I offer it for your consideration.

SENATOR WARNER: Senator Chambers, followed by Senator Withem. Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, I have no idea what is going on with this bill or what the intent is. Is the idea of this bill...I would like to ask Senator Withem a question because it's his bill. Is the idea of this bill, Senator Withem, that senators are believed to be taking money as payoffs under the guise of their being honoraria? Is that the purpose of the bill, to cut that out?

SENATOR WITHEM: Entirely not...it is not, Senator Chambers. The purpose...this is a bill that came from Accountability. It is not clear in the statutes today whether or not honoraria are acceptable. There is an interpretation of the bill which may be that they are not acceptable. There is one in which they are. Accountability and Disclosure has taken the interpretation that they are acceptable. They would feel more comfortable if the statute was changed to reflect that honoraria are acceptable and that's what the purpose of the bill is.