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LB 1021

committee amendments to LB 1021. Senator Kristensen. Was your light on, Senator?

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: No.

SENATOR CUDABACK: You're recognized, if it is. I don't make you sit down. We are now open for discussion on the committee amendments. No lights on. Senator Schimek, as Chairperson of the Government, Military Affairs Commission (sic), you are recognized to close.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you, Mr. President. Members of the body, I will take this opportunity to close on the amendment because, in a sense, it's a closing on the bill itself, because the committee amendments, as amended, do become the bill. And I would just like to commend you all for the discussion that we have had here this morning and afternoon. Senator Bromm is exactly right, he and I remember vividly that prior discussion. I think it has been an opportunity for all of us to reacquaint ourselves with the accountability statutes. I know I have learned from this experience and I'm certain that you have, too. So that's been very positive. There are other positive things that we have done here today and I think will go a long way towards making the accountability reports a lot more understandable and a lot more accurate as far as the public is concerned. We have decided that gifts, for instance that you and I report on our financial interest statements, will be categorized by set categories, so that we have a better idea about the value of the gifts. We have made lobbying fees more understandable by putting them into two separate categories of compensation and expense reimbursement. We said that there is a separate office expense category. We have said that we will report on aggregate amounts of money spent on the Legislature and on the executive branch officials for cost of events, so that the public gets a clearer idea of what is being expended. I mean, if everything were being expended on us that they say is expended on us, we would all probably weigh 500 pounds and be unable to function. I think this will help. (Laugh) We have said that...we have said that the definition of "gift" will in...like some...like...have some exceptions, like food and drink, but we also have added a new piece here regarding state and public institutions where we are saying that if they give