

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

April 4, 2001

LB 242

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Mr. President, I'm sensitive to the issue that Senator Baker is raising and maybe it's appropriate to make some distinction between classes of school districts. However, let's think about what we're talking about here. It is the provision that Senator Baker wants to strike out that brings school board members within the other rules and lists that we're talking about. How do you handle conflicts of interest? How do you handle issues of nepotism? Now, you can make an argument that school board members ought to be treated differently perhaps in those instances because we're having trouble finding people to serve on school boards. But how large are the budgets of schools? What are the responsibilities of individual members of school boards? Can we distinguish between school board members and county board members? Can we distinguish between school board members and persons who are elected officials on a land use planning commission? Can we distinguish between those folks and members of the...well, you can see the list. Can we or should we find some way to distinguish between school board members and those other folks? Isn't there a point, and maybe the point that you're making, Senator Baker, is we need to examine the classes that we're applicable to. Your amendment doesn't happen to do that. But at some point, school districts are very large organizations in terms of the budgets. They're very large organizations in terms of number of persons that they employ. They're very large organizations in terms of the responsibilities of the members of the board. And at some point, they do look like these other folks, and we need to bring them in...I would suggest in all seriousness that we need to bring them into line because they do look like these other kinds of organizations where we require information. And I think it is appropriate that they be subject to the same rules for nepotism, conflicts of interests, those kinds of things, and we make sure that that's the case. If Senator Baker...I don't think Senator Baker, your amendment quite does the things that we're talking about. I'd be happy to try to work that out with you so we could deal with that issue on Select File if you were willing to do that. And I think that would be a better way to handle it. I'm...I'm glad that we're having the discussion on these issues this morning. I think that they are important in terms of public confidence in our elected officials. Do they have conflicts of interest? Do they have things that we should