

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

March 12, 2002 LB 707

Session, 2001.)

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Senator Brashear, would you like to open on your amendment?

SENATOR BRASHEAR: Yes, Madam President. Thank you. Members of the body, AM1127 seeks to make an additional point with regard to the act. In 1997, at another of these crunch times, Senator Beutler and I reached a compromise. At that time, the Campaign Finance Limitation Act was scheduled to apply to the 1998 gubernatorial election, and there was a genuine chance that there would be demands on the fund that could not be sustained. There was a potential meltdown on the horizon, similar to the one that is going on, as we speak, in Massachusetts. Rather than risk that scenario, we amended the Campaign Finance Limitation Act so that it would apply only to the Legislature and such other offices as the commission would determine ought to be covered based on the availability of funds. Those amendments saved the act from potential disaster, but they were only a band-aid and not a cure. This amendment would revoke the changes made in 1997. It would make the act apply to all offices in all years regardless of the amount of funds available to satisfy the payments required thereunder. It would require us, in effect, to put up, as the phrase goes, to put up or to shut up. Either we mean everything we say in the preamble to the act, or we don't. Let me read the preamble to the act, please: The Legislature finds that the cost of running for statewide offices and legislative seats has risen greatly and that many qualified candidates are excluded from the democratic system as a result of such rising cost. The Legislature, further, finds that the United States Supreme Court has indicated that any limitation on campaign expenditures must be entered into voluntarily and that the utilization of public financing of campaigns is a constitutionally permissible way in which to encourage candidates to adopt voluntary campaign spending limitations. The Legislature, further, finds that using public funds to assist in the financing of campaigns for certain statewide offices and legislative seats, in conjunction with voluntary campaign spending limitations, will increase the number of qualified candidates able to run for office. The Legislature finds that there is a compelling state interest in