

there has not been a lot of discussion on this bill. Senator Schmit says that we just ought not to drag our affairs before the public one more time because as we can all appreciate the public undoubtedly is going to repudiate it, that he doesn't sense any change in the public's mood since the last election on salary. Now that may be right. I don't know. I have a hard time sensing what the public is going to do. I suspect in the end that the Legislature of the State of Nebraska is a whipping boy. In fact, in this morning's Lincoln Star there is a letter from some individual who says that, you legislators who are trying to get a pay increase ought to quit trying to get a pay increase, because all you do is you spend your time and you're responsive to the banker bills, and you are responsive to a lot of other special interests but you don't repeal the sales tax on food and you don't deal with our groundwater problems and a lot of other things, so plague on your House, why should we bother to give you a salary increase. I want to respond to that letter because I think to myself...I think to myself that that writer doesn't fully understand what the democratic process is all about. The democratic process is all about the give and take of ideas, values, demands and what have you. Now, sure we could repeal the sales tax on food, and sure we can take care of groundwater problems if we have a benevolent despot, or even a malevolent despot, but that is not the way democracy works. Democracy very simply means that we have a lot of folk with different views and different ideas, and we are going to pass some legislation that some folks like and we are going to pass some legislation that some folks don't like, and those kind of things are going to happen. And I guess we will always be a whipping boy. It is easy to kick the politicians in the Legislature around, but the easiest way, in my opinion, for us to kick ourselves around is to keep the pay so low that only...that only the affluent can serve, and that we can't get a truly representative body of the state. And that does mean that some values will receive a more favorable hearing probably than other values. And I say to you voters who are watching this and who are listening, and who are reading this, it is important to recognize in the end that you do right by your public servants so that they in turn, we in turn, can fully represent all the different values and competing concepts in society. This is a measure that has not yet been tried with the voters. We have not yet had this kind of provision on the ballot. I am willing to stand by it. I think it is one that we can articulate rationally. I think it is one that we can try, as we have in the past,