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LB 488

SENATOR GOODRICH: Mr. President and members of the body, I rise in opposition to the Vickers amendment for a couple of reasons. Number one is that these salaries, for example, can only be set every four years for the constitutional officers and every six years for the Public Service Commissioners. We are dealing with something that they will have to live with for six years. Now this does not go into effect, cannot go into effect, until 1983. That is when the new constitutional officers take their offices. You cannot raise the constitutional officers salary during the course of his office so consequently, none of these salary increases go into effect until 1983. Even the public service officers which will go into effect in 1983 and then you can't change it again for six more years and so it is for that reason that we must reject the Vickers amendment. We must reject anything else that would affect the slowing down of this particular bill because of the fact that, heck, we only get a chance to do it every four years. We are doing, in fact, in the elimination of the cars for example, we only gave them about a 7% raise. We limited it to 7% because the cars were supposed to make up the difference between that and what the ordinary employees get, state employees get or we wiped out the cars. Now, for example, if we do not reject the Vickers amendment we would not be able to give these public service commissioners any increase in salary for another six years. It is for that reason that I strongly urge you not to adopt the Vickers amendment, reject the Vickers amendment so that we can at least handle it this session so we can establish the filing fees, we can establish everything and get this particular matter handled so we don't have to wait another six years.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Fowler.

SENATOR FOWLER: Mr. President, there has probably been no one as critical of the Service Commission as I have. I find in many ways that I agree with Senator Higgins that they have been unaccountable, that they have not listened to a broad base of opinion, they have been responsive mainly to the industry but I do not think the solution is to penalize the commissioners by reducing the future salary. I think that if indeed we need changes in the Public Service Commission the way to do it is to make the salary attractive enough to attract qualified candidates and hopefully have districts drawn in such a way as to make it possible for those candidates to run. So I find myself strangely aligned with Senator Goodrich in opposing this amendment, believing that, in fact, we should keep the Public Service Commission salary at an increase, at least a slight increase as this bill calls for.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Vickers, do you wish to close?