

April 6, 1982

LB 761

SENATOR BEUTLER: Thank you, Senator Lamb, for your being candid. Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I don't want to say more at this particular point in time because I do want to see this amendment passed, but for myself, I am going to feel compelled to bring back to you shortly an amendment to put this money back in because in my opinion this place is run too much by the lobby, and if you cut staff, all it means is that the lobby gains greater control over the Legislature and that makes no sense to me whatsoever. Thank you.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Wiitala.

SENATOR WIITALA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, colleagues, I concur with Senator Beutler's beliefs on this issue. I would just like to say a few words concerning staff. I am very disheartened when I think the possibility that my office may rest on one or one and a half staff members during the year. I say that for a whole variety of reasons and I guess I just want to read it into the record. For me as a State Senator, one of the compensations of being in office is having staff members who can work for me because a good portion of the year I have to work in order to be in this office. The \$400 that I receive a month, around \$330 take home pay just barely pays for my mileage expenses to the State Capitol during our regular session and so I would say as the Senator representing the largest populated district in the state, I do indeed need staff and I'd find it very difficult to perform my responsibilities without their help. To cut staff is to cut a slice out of my district, at least as far as my responsibilities are concerned. I would like to remind this body that one of my staff members is the highest paid aide in the Unicameral. He has had five years of experience and he is close to having his doctor's degree but I think you should know what his salary is. It amounts to \$14,000. That is his family income. \$14,000 is not an awful lot of money. By cutting the salaries back, by reducing the amount of time the staff can work is tantamount to excusing many of our qualified staff members. My administrative aide who has worked for Senators for nine years receives a salary of \$12,000. That is a pittance considering the fact that she has given over a decade of work to the Unicameral. I think we have got to consider the implications of what this amendment implies as far as for state government and as far as serving our districts. You can include me in the support of Senator Beutler's amendment to replace back in the lost appropriations that would fund our staff. Thank you very much, members.

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