

SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, this is basically a request for a crumb but a very important crumb to the Workmen's Compensation Court in Nebraska. I believe it is basically to ask for a correction of an oversight. The sum and substance of the amendment is to add \$16,000, about \$16,000 back into the budget of the Workmen's Compensation Court. This part...this was the cut that they took as part of the general 3% cut under the Governor's plan and it is not my plan to nickel and dime the Governor's proposition here this morning. I think this amendment and one other are the only ones that are up but I did get a call from the judges in the court and I think they have a very legitimate concern. Please remember, and this is the important point that the Supreme Court and the District Court, the whole judicial system basically, was exempted from that across the board 3% cut but they did not exempt the Workmen's Compensation Court because that budget, I think, was so small that they simply overlooked it. But the reason that the Supreme Court and the District Courts were exempted, I think they are basically because the personnel costs in those systems are relatively so high and also because of the expanding work loads in a couple of instances. Now the Workmen's Compensation Court like the District Court and the Supreme Court is a court. It does have heavier than usual personnel costs as courts do. 86% of their budget is personnel costs and they also have a dramatically increasing work load. Their work load at the end of this year will be 100% higher than it was five years ago. So they have all of the problems that the Supreme Court and the District Courts have and I think that the exemption, adding back the \$16,000 in their case, would be as justified in this case as it is in the case of the Supreme Court and the District Courts. The chief judge of the Workmen's Compensation Court has checked with the budget officer, the Governor's budget officer and they have indicated that they do not oppose the adding on of the \$16,000. So with your consent I would ask that you approve this small amendment. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Warner.

SENATOR WARNER: First question, I guess, of Senator Beutler.

PRESIDENT: Senator Beutler, will you respond.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Yes.

SENATOR WARNER: You indicated I believe that the Governor's budget officer had no objection to this?