

pass. Douglas County, for example, has seen new cases increase annually from approximately 6,000 in 1972 to nearly 9,500 in 1988. This 58 percent increase in caseload tells only part of the story. The nature, complexity and duration of the cases in court have changed significantly. Cases in such highly technical areas as medical and legal malpractice, products liability, hazardous material, personal injury are now commonplace in the court. On the criminal side there has been a tremendous increase in drug related offenses. That situation could very well exist in any county of the state and we would expect that the commission to target the allocation to the area of greatest needs. We believe that it could be in Douglas County, but determination is up to the Judicial Commission, looking at the situation statewide. The district court sent to each of you senators a packet of materials outlining the need for help. We don't need to recite that here. We trust you have reviewed it. LB 147 is a first step in getting the help to the court system that the district court needs so it can maintain its level of case management. I might add in closing and in urging your support of the bill that Douglas County has not had an increase in the number of its district court judges since 1972 and you all know how much Douglas County has grown in population and how the caseload there has significantly increased. For these reasons I would urge you to advance the bill. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Senator Kristensen, please, followed by Senator Lindsay.

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. Members, I want to briefly review with you some of the basics and backgrounds behind district judges and what this bill is all about. As you remember, district courts handle the most serious types of cases. They handle the felonies, they handle dissolutions and they handle most of our major lawsuits of serious nature and so we're talking about the highest level of trial court and the court where most of our people come into contact with the serious nature of the legal system. What this bill does is increase the number of judges by two, but this does not place the district judges in any particular place. We have a system in this state called the Judicial Resources Commission. Once the two new judges are put in place, they will determine where the judges shall be placed throughout the state. They have a formula here which consists of new case filings, jury trials, the number of counties in their judicial district, the number of