

questioning of Senator Kristensen earlier. And first of all, let me say that I think this is an extremely important debate. I wish there were more senators on the floor because I think we really are getting at the crux of a lot of issues by discussing the issue of the Supreme Court. I have some reservations. I know Senator Lindsay has proposed that we expand the court from seven members to nine members and we have...in fact, there is quite a bit of precedent for that in that I think at one time the Nebraska Supreme Court had three members. We expanded it I know to five and then to seven and now Senator Lindsay has a proposal to expand it to nine and I think that is a proposal that is worthy of debate. Senator Landis has made one point, and that is that the Supreme Court caseload has gone up every year and that the number of cases being decided by or opinions being written by each judge has increased and is greater than the average, and I totally agree with that. I think that their work load is horrendous and that we need to do something about it. But I think the real essence of this issue is, who is going to control these kinds of decisions? Is it going to be the bar association? Is it going to be the judiciary themselves, or is it going to be the Legislature? And Senator Kristensen alluded in his argument to the federal system, and I think it's a very good point. The federal system does have an intermediate court of appeals, a circuit court of appeals. Fine. The federal system also has a system whereby the Congress decides who is going to be confirmed as a judge. We don't have that system in Nebraska. I believe Senator Wesely has a bill, Senator Chambers and Senator Chizek have co-sponsored, which would provide for the Legislature confirming judicial appointments, and I think that is really an important bill and one that I believe I can support because I think some of the issues Senator Chambers has raised goes to that question. Are we going to get judges who are going to be fair and impartial, and are we going to have judges that where we have input from the public on whether or not these are the kinds of judges that we want. I think the system of having the Legislature involved in that decision is a very important one. I'd like to see that argument or that debate go on at the same time we're discussing what kind of system we're going to have, whether it be an appellate court or whether we have a nine-judge court because I think we're getting to the real essence of the judicial system. And if we're going to change the judicial system at the appellate level, I think it's a good time to discuss changing it and making it similar to the federal system; I think it's a good time that we discuss what role should we as legislators have in the decision as to