

SENATOR SCHMIT: Uh-huh.

SENATOR HABERMAN: Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Wesely, please, followed by Senator Chambers, and Senator Kristensen.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Mr. President and members, I have supported and will continue to support increases in judges' salaries to recognize the important work that they do and try to bring them in line with what other types of judges' salaries are in other states, as well as commensurate salaries for attorneys. The only thing I would note, obviously, it is a 20 percent increase, is a very big increase and I have some concerns about that. More than that, what I would raise once again is, as the judicial branch comes to the legislative branch asking for salary increases, once again I note that this branch of government is shut out of the process of the nomination and selection of judges, that this legislative branch is not asked to be involved whatsoever on those judges that are now coming back to us asking for a salary increase. And I think that's a travesty. We have three separate branches of government but this branch of government has only asked for salary increases. It asked for adjustments like the appellate court that we're considering. But when it comes time to selecting who the personnel running that third branch of government are in the judicial branch we have nothing to say whatsoever, not even in the selection of the screening committees that work out there. We have no nomination authority after the Governor makes a selection, and it infuriates me that here we are being asked once again to provide additional salaries to judges we have no input whatsoever on how they're selected. That gets into quality, that gets into questions that I think many people could raise about the type of judges we do have, and it seems inappropriate to me to continue to have this situation and inequity that this legislative branch of government is not involved in that process. We have to get involved in it and I ask all of you to keep that in mind as we consider this issue.

PRESIDENT: Senator Chambers, please.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, I want to call the body's attention to what is being done here and I want it as a matter of record. If the bill were to be