

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I'm still huffing and puffing trying to get from my chair to my microphone so I can respond to Senator Chambers. However, I don't believe that his remarks probably at this point need to be responded to as much as the facts do. We have a problem and it's a problem that we have had for some time, and I want to go back and fill in for the record a few things for us to review. And I'm going to pull out the facts if I can get them here. Right now, the judges earn about...and this is the Supreme Court judges, they earn about \$66,600. And this bill would call them to raise to about \$70,000 this year and in 1991 is when there would be the increase to about \$84,000. Now the reason that we do that isn't just pulling those figures out of the hat. Back in 1975, our judges ranked about 24th in this country in judicial salaries and they were paid about \$35,000 at that time. From 1975 until 1990, they have slipped from 24th in the country down to 44th. We're very near the bottom in judicial salaries in this state. What this would do, this increase would put them back up into the middle by 1991, next year, with a salary of approximately \$84,000. That would put them into the realms of the Iowas, the Minnesotas and the Kansases for judicial salaries. Our rank right now I said was 44th; the highest paid Supreme Court in this country is in California, \$115,000. The average is right around 84,000, 82- to 84,000. Those are similar states that surround us. That's the Missouris, Minnesota, Iowa, all of our surrounding states have gone through this. And you say, well, those are states with larger population. Well, that's not...that's true, but the workload is higher in Nebraska for the appellate level than it is for the tri-level and thus what we're trying to do at this point is put those salaries back up into the middle with our surrounding states. If we would do that, we would be very, very comparable in terms of what we pay our entire salaries. The other thing we need to look at is that our salaries are not just for the Supreme Court judges, they also go to the trial courts, for the district judges and for the county judges, and their salaries would also rise. The raise in salary for the District Court would go up to \$77,000 by 1991. With that, I would ask if anyone has questions, we would be glad to respond to it and would urge you to move and advance LB 42. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator McFarland, please.

SENATOR MCFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. President. The issue here with the judicial salary increase is just a matter of fairness.