

I am sure you have heard that before. What we're trying to do by passing this bill out of the Judiciary Committee is to provide a level of income to judges in our state that should be commensurate with the job requirements, the market forces and the abilities that they have. If you compare judicial salaries in Nebraska with the salaries of other attorneys in the public sector, I think you will find that our judges rank very low in comparison and perhaps some of these statistics have been given, but, for example, the Dean of the Law School makes \$115,000 a year. All of the federal judges make in the neighborhood of 88- to \$102,000 a year. The bankruptcy court judge, the Douglas County Attorney, other...the median salary of professors of law at the University of Nebraska, all of those are much higher than what we pay the judges on our Supreme Court and our District Courts. That position as a judge is a very important one. It fulfills a tremendous responsibility to the people of our state. We rely upon judges to be beyond reproach, to be competent scholars, to decide very difficult issues that exist in our society. And, for that reason, it's only fitting that they be paid accordingly and paid commensurate with what other attorneys are earning in the public sector and in the private sector, I might add, as well. If we are going to keep a quality judiciary in our state, I think we need to make sure that we have a salary commensurate with the job requirements. My fear is that if we do not increase the salaries as are needed, we will not continue to be able to attract quality and qualified and competent people to the bench. And, as a result, we will have a diminishment in the type and quality of judges that we have. It is unfortunate that we don't pay our judges as well as we should. It seems to me that the type of judge that you want is that you want the elite of the legal profession to be judges. You want the people who are legal scholars, who are beyond reproach, who will judge fairly and accordingly, not to their own personal predispositions, but according to the dictates of the law and according to the objective standards that we require of them. For that reason, I think that the percentage increase in the bill is not only fair, it is reasonable and it should be adopted. And I would urge you to support the bill in its present form. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Mr. Clerk, I understand we have an amendment.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Haberman would move to amend the bill. (The Haberman amendment appears on page 769 of the