

it was going to come absolutely free, but much of it is somewhat of a transferred distortion in the fact that these activities are costing the taxpayers while they're being housed in the Secretary of State's office now. Again, like I say, he's not going to transfer people out because he can use them anyway, even though they've been relieved of election activity. But those costs, I think, are probably rather valid.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Okay. Now would you consider then probably an ongoing cost of running this would be in the 140 to 150 thousand, except for additional costs for election years? Is that...

SENATOR CONWAY: I would guess that, you know, the election year coming up, the fiscal note for that is 139,000, let's call it 140, and so I think that would be pretty typical, because even in an election year this particular commission...the activity is going to happen at the county level. This is more administrative oversight. So I don't see that doing much more than an inflationary increase.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: All right. Well, I'm going to speak to support this. And I've had several calls and concerns expressed about this bill. And the problem I have is I can't come up with anything that I guess is any better in terms of the way this model has been. It's after Accountability and Disclosure...patterned after that particular commission that is apparently working fairly successfully. There are some that are concerned about the cost of this, and I guess Senator Conway and others wouldn't mind if the Appropriations Committee is particularly frugal in this area, like we try to be in all others, as this goes along that there is some concern about the potential expansion. And my thought is if there is going to be expansion cost, wherever it may be in the election area, it probably doesn't make a lot of difference if it's in this area, or in the Secretary of State's office, if there is going to be some necessary expanded costs. So I am supporting this with the understanding that there are several around the state that are uncomfortable with this approach that we're taking. I simply just don't have a better way to try to approach this in a very even-handed, nonpartisan way. The way we have it balanced, I guess I'll look carefully at the...

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.