

SENATOR MAURSTAD: Okay, thank you, Senator.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Maurstad. Would like to recognize some guests of Senator Wehrbein. We have 12 eleventh and twelfth graders from Conestoga High School in Murray, Nebraska and their teacher. They are located up in the north balcony. If you'd stand so we could welcome you we'd sure appreciate it. Senator Chambers, followed by Senator Beutler.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, it's obvious that I am the only one with some of the concerns that I expressed, but I do want to put them into the record because again I say this bill is, it's smoke and that is no reflection on Senator Beutler. He just is not going to accomplish what he thinks he is going to accomplish with this bill. I have been referred to as the Sancho Panza of the Legislature, the one who jousts with windmills, this is something which doesn't even rise to that level. We of all people know how cynical the world of politics actually is. Senator Maurstad very correctly, in my opinion laid out a scenario that can and will occur and a person's campaign can and will be funded totally with public money. The only thing that will not happen based on the bill that Senator Brashear is moving along is that the person who lends himself or herself some money cannot recover interest and other things as a result of having made that loan, but mine goes even deeper than that. What Senator Beutler seems to be telling a person such as myself is this. Whatever personal scruples and principles you have, the political system has reached a turn whereby the Legislature wants it to be declared the policy of this state that if you do not go out and raise a certain amount of money during the primary or the general election, you simply are not viewed as a serious candidate and it's based on money, not integrity, not honesty, not existing record of public service. It reduces itself only to money. I disagree with Senator Beutler to this extent. I don't think every candidate who is serious about winning could raise the amount of money that would constitute 25 percent of the limit established by statute for that office. If we are going to say that this is supposed to be a form of democracy, a representative democracy, we want the electoral process to be open to all people who would seek an office and we allow people to come in and say I don't have the money to pay the filing fee and run, but once all of that is said, we're going to become very serious about what we really mean. If you