

start out cheap. What the Legislature does is start cheap, it stays cheap. We could reach a point where everybody would acknowledge that there should have been a higher base salary to begin with. When we try to raise it to the level that we agree to people are going to not look at the dollar amount. They're going to say that percentage increase is just too much. They should get it, but the Governor won't get an increase based on that percentage, the judges won't, the state employees won't and we will be in a position that we find ourselves with probation officers--everybody saying they should get a raise but they were kept low for so long that any time we make an effort to bring them to where everybody agrees they should be we run into a brick wall. So we are making a new departure with this bill. I would rather that we start out giving a salary at least at the level that Senator Kristensen had envisioned and I want to ask him a question so that I... I'm sure that I understand Senator Vrtiska's chart. Senator Kristensen, the top three boxes would be your recommendations in the bill right now. Is that correct?

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: Yes, that's correct.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you. And, members, I would like to stay at that level. Seventy-four thousand, nine hundred, thirty-three dollars is a real eye-opener if you're a member of the Legislature because we don't get anything, but when you consider the work that we do and the importance of the job we really should get more, even those of you that (laugh) I don't like. You still should get more money. There aren't many of you that I don't like, being honest. Everybody... sometimes you're my whipping boys, my whipping girls, my punching bags, my scapegoats, so all of you have some value so I'd like to see you get a higher salary. (Laugh) I wanted to see who's listening. That's the only way you get them to pay attention. Now when I go back to talking about the important thing, which is the salary, only Senator Kristensen and I will be listening and Senator Bohlke and Senator Hudkins.

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: I wouldn't get too carried away.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: But I haven't been persuaded by Senator Vrtiska that we ought to reduce the amount from the start. Another thing that I am reluctant to do is tie the salary to that of the judges. Again, I want to ask Senator Kristensen a question.