

SENATOR SCHIMEK: ...we're somewhere in the ballpark where I think it should be, because I disagree with Senator Vrtiska. I don't believe that running for the Legislature is like taking a job which will be your families livelihood and will be a career perhaps or will be something that will impact on your car.... No, I know, but I don't think you can compare our salaries, Senator Vrtiska, with the salaries of somebody who would be in a job like this. And I...and, Senator Chambers, I guess I feel the same way for your benefit, too. So I just wanted to make sure that we're talking about something higher at least than what Senator Vrtiska is talking about, because I don't believe that's adequate. With that, I don't have any other comments.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Schimek. Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Madam President, members of the Legislature, as Senator Kristensen pointed out at this juncture we're trying to arrive at a basis for establishing a beginning level of pay which then would be the basis for increases. And I don't want us to tie it to any existing pay grade which would result in these people bumping a maximum amount which is less than what I think they should get. So maybe we can work our way through and around that, but at least it would be different from tying it to the judges salary and we could get away from these specific dollar amounts that are kind of holding us up at this point. I would want to comment on what my friend, Senator Vrtiska, said. He listens, but he didn't listen to everything (laugh) and he didn't listen well. Senator Vrtiska, what I said is that the little bit of money we make should cause a person to realize that it's obvious we're not working this job like you would a salary job where you think that what you're being paid, \$12,000 a year, is what this job should merit, that there's dedication involved in this because that's no money. And I gave the example of the \$31,000 in Iowa to show that in other states they regard this position that we hold as one worthy of more compensation than the public deems us to be worthy of in Nebraska. My statement about valuing a position now comes to the bill. I wanted to make it clear that since we're creating a position we show the value we place on that position and the work to be done by means of the salary or the compensation that we accord the people who hold the position. And I don't want us to travel cheap, cheap, cheap. I'm going to support Senator Kristensen's amendment because it does get us away from where we are right now and allows us to proceed.