

concern is we didn't take that step before we tried to do it. We didn't take the step of changing the language which would then allow us to offer an amendment to LB 394 to have it come out of the committee like this, which I don't have a problem with, but I think we ought to make the substantive changes to allow us to follow that procedure first because I think we're not following procedure with that. I think judges deserve a pay increase. I feel very strongly about that. and I will be this afternoon, when we get to it, LB 189, will be arguing very strongly for that increase because I think it is...it's...there is no question, I think it's deserved and it's necessary, but in order...in doing that, we ought to be following the procedure. Here is my fear about this particular procedure, with no substantive statutory language to allow for it; LB 394 is not judges only. It is not judges salaries only. It also deals with appropriations for other officers of government. How would some of you, who have talked about salaries of other officers of government, like to see an amendment, or for that matter, how would the press like to see an amendment to an Appropriations Committee buried in an amendment, an increase in the Governor's salary, or an increase or decrease in the Attorney General's salary, or an increase or a decrease in the Auditor's salary, or we have a similar...not so many hands on the decrease in the Auditor's salary. That could be buried in an Appropriations Committee if we follow this procedure because the Auditor's salary is set by statute. The Governor's salary is set by statute. The Lieutenant Governor's salary is set by statute. The Attorney General's salary is set by statute. The judges salary is set by the statute that Senator Withem mentioned. LB 721 would have amended that statute to say this is how we are going to set salaries in the future. That may or may not be good policy. I think it is, but I think we ought to be talking about that substantive bill first because I think that the precedent that is being set will allow, maybe two years from now, when it is politically difficult to get an increase in a Governor's salary, or an Attorney General's salary, maybe we ought to just bury that in Appropriations Committee somewhere. All of the valid, same valid reasons would apply. I don't think we ought to do it unless the statutory language is there to allow us to do that. Bottom line, this is a dangerous precedent to set. I support the procedure, once we've enacted the procedure, but to do it without enacting that procedure into statute, I think it is a very dangerous precedent. I do very, very strongly support increasing the judges salaries, but I very much support doing that under an established procedure.