

February 23, 1996 LB 1248

SENATOR BEUTLER: I would give my time to Senator Chambers.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Senator Chambers, you have five minutes.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Senator Beutler and members of the Legislature, I'm offering this as a serious amendment, but I know, as I stated, it's not being taken seriously. But this issue means a lot to me. And I don't like what is being done with this bill, so I'm going to fight it. You all can ignore it, if you want to. But you will not ignore, I assure you, the rest of what I'm going to do with this bill. The issue that brought it here was one related to the costs of a capital prosecution. The Attorney General I know, in the past, has assured members of the Legislature that there is no extraordinary cost associated with these death penalty cases, because the Attorney General Office handles the appeals. So let me ask Senator Vrtiska a question. Senator Vrtiska,...

SENATOR VRTISKA: Yes.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: ...why has this Ryan case cost the county so much if the Attorney General's Office is handling it and the state is picking up so much of the cost?

SENATOR VRTISKA: I don't have an answer for that. I just wanted to make one comment, if you don't mind,...

SENATOR CHAMBERS: No, go ahead.

SENATOR VRTISKA: ...just for a second. You talk about the costs associated with the prosecution, I guess I'd have to ask you the question, in my opinion, at least what I've been able to learn, the majority of the cost is in the defense of these individuals. And I guess you'd be the last one to say that these people shouldn't have adequate defense when they're charged with some type of capital crime, isn't that correct?

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Well, the term "prosecution of the case" means that...the entire handling of the matter.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Well it didn't say that, it said "prosecution". I thought you were leaving out the word "defense", and I...and that certainly is a big part of the cost.