

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

May 5, 1999

LB 44

I'm done. I appreciate it. I'm sorry.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Senator Landis, on the Chambers amendment to LB 44.

SENATOR LANDIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature. I do have an interest in this issue and I think Senator Chambers and Senator Beutler and myself may be the ones who were here when a strangely analogous situation arose, I'm going to guess, 18 years ago. We used to have a provision in our law that said that sheriffs who provided meals to their inmates were paid a statutory amount. And what happened was they would fix meals that were less than the statutory amount, they would wait until the evening time, they'd bring in a couple of people standing around the corner that had maybe a little too much liquor on their breath, they'd provide them a couple of meals, and the next day would come and be gone, and what would happen is there would be this sort of side bounty, as it was called. And the bounty was in the ability to arrest somebody and make money on the arrest because you provided them meals for the arrest. The patterns changed around the state in various places, but wherever there was a sheriff or a sheriff's family member that was providing the meal there were more arrests. I got to tell you, I want to learn a little bit more here, and I'll tell you why. I think it's legitimate that drug confiscation money go back into the business of getting more and appropriate resources for catching what is a terrible social evil. On the other hand, I got to also say that I've seen a situation in which, if a bureaucracy can feed itself off-line, if it has its own way of printing money, if it doesn't have to go through the appropriation process because it simply gets to recycle money from one of its pockets to another and not go through the appropriation process, there is a real opportunity for mischief there. And so I will want to hear how this money is being perverted in its ultimate usage. If it's appropriately being spent, if it's expanding our war on drugs, if it's going for, you know, things that the public probably ought to be paying for but isn't because of our limited resources, that's one thing. But if we are overequipping ourselves, if we are sending ourselves to travel and to conferences, if we are getting things that have very little to do with the stopping of the flow of drugs, then it seems to me that this is a most