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LR 5

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Coordsen? Senator Coordsen to open on the committee amendment to LR 5CA.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Senator Kristensen, members of the body. The committee amendments, as I think everybody in this room knows, simply replaces the "XXX" with "two thousand" dollars, which, in my way of ciphering, makes it \$24,000 a year. Now, I will tell you that there's nothing magic about this. I will tell you that this amount, if it is...this constitutional amendment, if it is...an amount is decided upon and is placed on the ballot, will not conflict with the compensation commission that we just advanced. It is the...it was the opinion of the Executive Board, and I believe the vote was unanimous, that the voters of the state of Nebraska were entitled to have the two ideas to make a decision on, and that is why this was...these two issues were both advanced to the floor. They are not in conflict. They can coexist in the constitution. What LR 5CA with the committee amendment would propose, that the salary of legislators in the next session, or after it was established, pardon me, by the...either in the next session for the session following, would be \$24,000 a year. If the compensation commission was also established, then the base would be, in my estimation, \$24,000 a year, although the commission could, I think, recommend a lower amount than that. There's nothing magic about \$24,000 a year. A lot of people are nervous about this. My contention was simply that I believe that to the state of Nebraska, today and into the future, that a member of the Legislature has a value that is more than...my figure would have been, as I think I indicated in the debate on the previous bill, my figure would have been \$36,000. Twenty-four thousand dollars, though, accomplishes inflation for the last 11 years, plus about a \$6,000 leg up till the next salary increase, whenever that comes, would be placed before the voters of the state of Nebraska. So under the current rate of inflation, \$24,000, since this is a static figure placed into the constitution should this be the only amendment that would be adopted, would be nothing more than inflation for the last 11 years, plus an estimated similar inflation rate for the next six. And that's the basis for \$24,000. With that, Mr. President, I shall turn the debate over to the members of the Legislature.