

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

March 2, 2000

LB 1085

**SPEAKER KRISTENSEN:** Thank you, Mr. President, members of the Legislature. LB 1085 deals with the Commission on Public Advocacy. As you know, they are assigned to represent defendants throughout the state on major cases. One of the things that they do is they bill the counties when the case is done for the cost of their defense, which the counties are then obligated to pay one-third of that. That commission has been operating for now three years, I believe, and it's been doing very well by all accounts. At their request, this bill was introduced. What this bill does is that the cost that they have for mileage and travel out to some of the far-reaching counties would not be billed. The purpose for that is that some of those counties, because they are far away, are hesitant to have the commission appointed, and the commission said we want to make sure we serve everybody and so they desire not to charge for their travel and for their mileage. What that does, there, as you will see, that's going to be absorbed by the commission. It's not a great amount of money, but for some counties that can be. The bill does two other things. It divides them into divisions so they can qualify for grant money. It also allows them to have session laws and statutes that we've not allowed them to have in the past. It's kind of hard to practice law without the session laws and the Journals, and so we want to make sure that they have those. In there, it also requires that they do bill for actual expenditures for expert witnesses, depositions, photocopying, printing and that is so that when they do have grant money they can show actual expenditures. Thank you, Mr. President.

**PRESIDENT MAURSTAD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To open on the committee amendments, Senator Brashear.

**SENATOR BRASHEAR:** Mr. President, members of the body, the adopted Judiciary Committee amendment makes only a minor change to the bill and furthers the intent of the bill. In its original form, LB 1085 prohibited the commission from charging the cost of travel to counties, and in an apparent oversight, the bill as drafted did not amend a section of the statute to include the prohibition on travel expenses such as cost for lodging and meal expenses. The amendment adopted by your committee resolves the discrepancy and specifies that the cost