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SENATOR D. PEDERSON: Mr. Lieutenant Governor, members of the body, I've spoken on this issue before. I appreciate what Senator Beutler is doing. I think mechanically what he's...what he is showing here is accurate. I do have a great concern, however, as I've expressed before, what we are really accomplishing by switching this system to a...to being state employees. And the concern I have is twofold; number one, it's financial because obviously we are incurring a great deal of state expense as a result of this transfer, even under the modified proposal that Senator Beutler is showing, but I think also it's going to have an effect in the courthouses throughout the state because I think that we are developing a two-level system of finance. We have one by the state and, frankly, it's a considerably higher pay scale for state operations, and I think that it does tend to create and will create some problems within the courthouses, and I'm certain that this is going to impact salaries of other employees within the courthouse. And I think it's going to have kind of a log-rolling effect, to a certain extent, which I believe would eat up any local benefit that would come as a result of these people becoming state employees. The other reason that I'm concerned about this is I don't think we need it. I don't think we need to have these people be state employees. I think that the system is working fine. I don't think it creates any problem if they continue to be county employees. I think the only reason why we're considering making them state employees is because we did it for the county court system, and I don't know that that's any justification. To me, it seems that we are, in effect, creating something that is unnecessary and incurring additional expense, and I do not believe that there will be offsetting local property tax relief. Thank you.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN PRESIDING

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Vrtiska.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members...or, Mr. Lieutenant Governor and members of the body. I rise to endorse the message handed to you by Senator Pederson. I also agree that I don't...I can see some real difficulties arise for the implementation of this piece of legislation. I understand