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LB 1021

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature, this has been a very informative discussion, certainly good for me. The amendment that I'm offering right now offers you a choice, an option. That's all it does. It doesn't require you to do anything, or necessarily cause you to do anything, but it gives you a tool to use to determine the value of a gift and who it is that gave you the gift. Who gave you the gift, of course, is important in terms of what category...what you have to do with it. If it came from a lobbyist or a principal, then you have that \$50 limitation. If it didn't, if it came from a person other than that, and putting relatives and immediate family aside for the moment, then you have just the financial statement reporting obligation. But if you're like me, you don't always know who the gift came from exactly. Sometimes they just appear on your table. So you don't know who the principal or...whether it came from the principal, whether it came from a lobbyist, or whether it came from some other party and just happened to be delivered to you by one of those folks. So that's problematic from time to time. And also, of course, the value of something you may well not know. When you look at the statute that is on the bottom of page 4, it says, no official or member of the legislative branch, among others, shall accept a gift with a value of more than \$50. What my amendment says is that, in determining the value and source of a gift, you and I can rely upon a statement of value and source with respect to the gift, and that any person giving the gift can...you can request a statement of that person of the value and of the source. I see that option as, from time to time, useful to you with respect to that statute that is set forth at the bottom of page 4. It would also have some applicability to that part of the bill that's in the back, requiring reporting of financial information, to the extent that you need to categorize gifts in certain dollar amounts. It's probably not as much use to you there, because you can make a good-faith estimate, and because in that particular category, if it's not from a lobbyist and a principal, you oftentimes probably wouldn't want to ask a person how much their gift was. I mean, you just wouldn't want to do it. So it's of limited value in that part of the bill. But I throw it out to you as an option, and something of, maybe of time to time, some value in terms of complying, especially with the provisions on the bottom of page 4 of the committee amendment. So, I throw that out for your consideration.