

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

April 4, 2000

LB 1021

on language, but here's what the intent is. Where you have a group event, where senators are all invited, that would be considered to be a type of entertainment expense that would be reported by the sponsor or the lobbyist or the group as an expense in the aggregate, this many dollars for senators at this event. If, however, it is not such an event and if someone takes me for lunch and they spend more than \$5, that would be an individual expenditure that they would report and they would affix my name to that expenditure. This excludes those expenses for food and drink of less than \$5, but it attempts to set up two categories of reporting for the principal or the lobbyist, one for group events that are reported in the aggregate, and one for I would say "nongroup" events where members of the Legislature are invited and money is expended for lunches. From what I have heard through the last couple of years, rightly or wrongly, this is what some of the public would like us to report. Would it be a bookkeeping nightmare? Well, I'm going to suggest that lobbyists and principals are going to have to keep these records in any event because they have to report these kinds of expenses. The difference will be if it's over \$5 they're going to have to put a name with it and keep that record. That is basically it in a nutshell. I'd be interested in hearing the discussion. I have...let me also go into one other matter on this, I'll use this time maybe for more than an opening. More years ago that I would like to admit, I stood on the floor of the Legislature and proposed a couple of measures with respect to this subject area and we went into a real intense debate, late at night, as I recall, and it was very, very contentious. And we probably didn't have nearly as good a discussion as we're having today. And, for whatever reason, I am...I want to compliment the leaders of the Legislature for the manner and the tenor with which this problem, I shouldn't say problem, but this challenge has been approached. And in looking at revisions to this subject area, very, very difficult, very personal, it's natural for us, especially when we're putting in 12-14 hours a day or more, to feel somewhat put upon if someone feels like we shouldn't have a carrot cake once in a while, or a lunch or whatever. I mean, I understand that. So, Senator Schimek and Wickersham and Chambers, Senator Beutler and Senator Coordsen and others, I think the way that you've approached this is...I feel like we've matured somewhat as a body in being able to discuss this subject because it wasn't handled this way