

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

April 10, 2000 LB 1021

right amount or not. I'm interested in your discussion, one way or the other, on it. But it seems to me that this problem should be at least approached, should be discussed. If there's some way of resolving it, we should try to resolve it, but I throw it out there for your consideration. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Beutler. On the Beutler amendment, Senator Landis, followed by Senators Schrock, Tyson and Kristensen. Senator Landis.

SENATOR LANDIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not exactly sure what the language means, although I hear Senator Beutler's description. It says no official, spouse of an official, or member of an official's staff in the executive or legislative branch shall accept gifts with an aggregate value of more than \$1,000 from any entity or individual. Now, gift, if my wife got a bonus from her work, it's not a salary, it's a bonus, makes it a gift, right? Employer an entity? Yeah. What if I have a very wealthy friend who gives my wife, on her 50th birthday, a really expensive gift? I think I'm in violation as an individual. As my best friend who stood up for me at my wedding, 30 years before, for my 30th wedding anniversary, if he gives me too expensive of a gift, because he's now got a "dot com" business and he can afford this stuff, I think I'm in violation of the language I read here, I think, on the proposed amendment. There are two things that I think are very legitimate in this area. Number one, if a deal is made and it's for any amount of money, it's a crime and people should be prosecuted. A thousand dollars is drawing a line in the sand. What, if you sold your vote for 400 bucks it wouldn't be wrong? Sure it would be wrong. It's because you sold your vote; it's not the amount. Two things are wrong. Number one, doing anything like a deal for any amount of money, which is why 50 bucks, 100 bucks, 400 bucks or 1,000 bucks are irrelevant. It's making a deal; that's wrong. It's a crime; it should be prosecuted. And the second thing is after that it is disclosure, disclosure is the tool. We got disturbed with Martha wrote a...Martha Stoddard wrote an article about following tobacco contributions and tobacco votes. Guess what? (Laugh) That's the pain of disclosure. And, by the way, that, of all the things that happens, is the most important tool. The problem with these kinds of limit provisions are twofold.