

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

March 18, 2003      LB 608

revised statutes requires that all information of the Fiscal Office be available to any and all senators. Now, I admit that that section is amended by the bill, but it demonstrates the historic role of our Legislative Fiscal Office, which is very, very different from the Department of Revenue. Second, the section as drafted requires that more information be provided to the Legislative Fiscal Office than it would appear to require. The amendment proposes that apparently all information that is not prohibited from disclosure under federal law be provided to the Legislative Fiscal Office. The information, however, can only be used for the sole purpose of making a cost-benefit analysis. There is then a great breadth of information that would be provided to the Legislative Fiscal Office and that's why I'm seeking to eliminate that portion. It's necessary to oppose this language until the link between the data provided and the use thereof is better demonstrated. Third, the justification for providing this information to the Legislative Fiscal Office is, in my opinion, misplaced. It states that the Legislative Fiscal Office will use the data to determine the economic benefits and costs of projects. There is simply no justification for the Legislative Fiscal Office determining the cost-benefit analysis of specific projects on a project-by-project basis. Why do we need that information? The Fiscal Office determines the costs and benefits of our policies as we adopt them here in the Legislature. There is a need to determine what specific information the Legislative Fiscal Office needs in order to fulfill its historic mission of assessing the costs and the benefits of the policy choices that we make as a Legislature. When that is known then we can consider what else we might do. But this language, as proposed, provides too much information for a purpose that is too uncertain and not yet established as necessary, at least in my mind, to an office that has historically disclosed to any and all senators and disclosed to the public. The cost in terms of creating a negative environment is simply too great, and I urge the adoption of my amendment which will eliminate the transfer of information to the Legislative Fiscal Office. Now to the second point with regard to requiring more disclosure, which the amendment that I'm proposing does, the second part relates to disclosures to the Department of Revenue. The amendment retains the language of the Revenue Committee amendment that requires