

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

March 3, 2004

LB 962

who have thought about various programs, agencies, departments, have our own ideas as to which should have the highest priority when it comes to necessary funding, which have the lowest priority when it comes to allowing cuts. Well, I want to serve notice that the courts, despite my criticism of various judges, complaints that I have filed that have resulted in the disciplining of judges, despite all of that, the court system, the judiciary as an institution, as a very important branch of government, must be adequately funded, and not by increasing fees. I know that's the easy way. I know four-plus years hence, when I no longer am on the scene, court costs will probably skyrocket and will be used for every manner of inappropriate purpose. But while I am here I shall not allow that system to be sullied, to be tarnished, to be contaminated by being converted to what we would have to call a dispenser of cash register justice. That is not justice. Now to come back to what is before us here, maybe the Governor was carefully parsing his words when he said he would be against a general increase in income tax or sales tax. Maybe he had in mind some water works that would need funding, and he wanted to be sure that he did not include, in funding that thing that he wanted, a type of tax that he would be opposed to increasing. But even if the Governor, with his wily, tricky self, in laying out a political agenda to advance his political career and political fortunes, is going to carve out a particular tax that fits in with that agenda and say he will not be opposed to raising it, I am not bound by what the Governor feels is in his best interest. I am not bound to vote for this bill if, in the process of voting for it and ultimately having it become law, we will aggravate the problem that we face with shortfalls. Some people on the floor who will call themselves fiscal conservatives are just like those who might be called fiscal liberals. It all depends on what the issue is. That's why I reject all labels. They're too easily transferable to this person or that person, this issue or that issue. And that's all they are--labels that are imprecise and incapable of precise definition. So I don't care whether people in their minds deem me to be a conservative, a liberal, an ultraconservative, a reactionary, a superconservative, a radical, or any other thing that simple-minded, shallow people have to do in trying to discuss a person who may have some complexity about himself or herself.