

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

January 5, 2005

for that office, I'm running for that office. That's why I'm here. And I would urgently ask your support and hope that you can cast your vote for me as Chair of the Appropriations Committee. Thank you.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Don Pederson. The Chair recognizes Senator Wehrbein.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker; congratulations, too. And, members of the body, I'd like to nominate myself once again for the position of Chairman of the Appropriations Committee. I want you to know that I have anguished over the decision to run for Speaker, and I was encouraged by many of you. However, the better choice, I concluded this past week, was to not run for Speaker but to ask instead for your vote to continue as Appropriations Chair. Sometimes we have to all make decisions that we have to change our minds. I realize that my late decision had perhaps caused anguish for others, and I apologize for that. However, though it would have been possible to run for this Chairmanship even after attempting and failing to win the Speakership, I am concerned the precedent set may not have been timely and possible. Perhaps it is better addressed by those of you that follow us and have to deal with that impact of term limits when it comes. I have always served on the Appropriations Committee. During my time we have endured two financial crises and, as Senator Pederson said, one which we have not yet fully recovered. I owe many thanks to the members of the Legislature, and particularly to the members of the Appropriations Committee the last several years that I've been on it, which, by the way, is 18. And I present...and I compliment those that have worked hard along with those of us in the leadership positions to find solutions to our many difficult problems. I would pledge to continue that. I recognize that my style of leadership is being challenged. Let me remind you of what I believe it is: consensus seeking and building; two, respect for various individual positions; three, a fair and honest evaluation before making a decision. I believe that this is a fair description of the way I've...of my record and the way I've run the committee. I have tried very hard to keep this process open and fair. In fact, I consider one of my accomplishments the last many years is that the process is more