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

February 8, 2005 LB 53

people. I've known young people, they got three DUIs, or something like that, or whatever it is to get classified as a felony. And probably when they get to be 35 years old, they just as well be allowed to vote, because it's all been behind them. That's one thing. But I think, are we putting together some of these very serious crimes...you've had some serious crimes happen in your end of the state; we've had some serious crimes happen in our end of the state. And I still have a problem with thinking that those people, in 30 years or so from now, that committed those crimes, will be eligible to vote. I don't know if they should be allowed those benefits or not. And I'm wondering if perhaps there shouldn't be some amendments to this somewhere along the line, that we should have some classification of felonies that would be disallowed from voting. Do you have any thoughts on that way?

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Senator Louden, we talked about that briefly in committee. And of course, those who have committed heinous crimes are going to be in prison for life, or in some cases the state may execute them. On the others, certainly...I mean, one would have to argue that the criminal justice system is perfect, in the first place, and that it's wise in distributing and meting out punishments. And I'm not sure that we're wise enough in this legislative body to decide who should and who should not get to vote, based on the severity of the crimes. You and I both know....

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: One minute.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: ...that in some counties that have a small population, it is very difficult for them to actually bring somebody to trial for first-degree murder. And oftentimes, that crime becomes manslaughter, and that's the way they're convicted, because of the costs of convictions. When you've got a lot of inequities in the system to begin with, I don't know how you sort through that, if you start looking at severity of crime.

SENATOR LOUDEN: Well, true. Of course, when it's manslaughter or car wrecks or something like that, that's one thing. But I'm going to continue listening to this. I haven't made up my mind