

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

February 9, 2005 LB 53

to vote, or not?

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Right now, we don't know for sure, Senator. And that was one of the reasons that the election commissioners and county clerks who served on the task force...that's just one of the reasons they were in favor of doing something like this, and addressing the ex-felon from other states, which we tried to clean that up in this bill, to make it clear that it was...that it didn't apply to them. And so I would say that this is better. I mean, this makes it better, in knowing exactly how to treat ex-felons from other states, than existing statutory language did. But the election clerks and county clerks told us they don't know when somebody comes in. They don't have a clue.

SENATOR McDONALD: Absolutely. And if someone is on the voting records, becomes a felon, and then...an ex-felon, and goes back, or even moves to another area, do we have any way of identifying them as an ex-felon?

SENATOR SCHIMEK: I'm going to have to ask about that. Because I don't think so; that's part of the problem.

SENATOR McDONALD: And I'm guessing so. Because at this point in time, I'm thinking that we are allowing ex-felons from other states to come in and vote. We are also allowing felons...ex-felons that have voted previously in elections to continue to vote. So some are being allowed to; some are not being allowed to, maybe because they know someone on the election board that says, hey, listen, you're an ex-felon, you're not allowed to vote. So we're not consistent in our voters at this point in time. And as we look at the numbers of people that have voted in the last elections, sometimes we have less than a 50 percent turnout, many times between 25 and 35 percent turnout in our elections. For those that have the right to vote, a lot of them don't even care to vote. And so if you're an ex-felon and you do want to vote and you at least care, I believe you should be given the right to vote. So I have totally changed my thought on ex-felons given the right to vote. Because up until this year, I would have said no. And this year, I believe that we should give them the right to vote, because they care. Thank you.