

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

May 4, 2005

LB 542

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature, just to refresh your memory, this is a group designed by Senator Burling to study tax policy. And tax policy consists of a number of different areas that I'll go back to in a minute. But the commission that is now in place under Senator Burling's amendment to study tax policy consists of eight members of the Legislature, to be designated by the Executive Board. And then there are seven different individuals appointed by the Governor. One represents the education community, production agriculture, industry and manufacturing, financial sector, telecommunications sector, city government, and county government. And I just wanted to add two people to that list, to give it some balance. One of those persons would be a representative of organized labor, as appointed by the Governor, just as the others are. And the other is a representative of a low-income advocacy group, also appointed by the Governor. And then, in order to balance out the Governor's appointees with the legislative appointees, in accordance with the original proportion between the two groups, I also added two members of the Legislature to be appointed by the Legislature. So you end up with ten members of the Legislature and nine members appointed by the Governor. But the study is a general and broad study of tax policy. It identifies all of the different tax principles, the basic tax principles that one should look at. And it cuts across, obviously, all income groups, all people. It's a study that is to, as I understand it, study the effect upon all people, and not just the effect on certain types of industries or certain types of businesses. It says that...under language that's left in the bill, that it is to examine, for example, household tax burdens, and normal tax rates, all the different types of tax rates involved, including residential property taxes and that sort of thing. So it seemed to me that the slant that was currently there gives good representation to industry groups of one type or another, but not particularly good representation to the average taxpayer, or to the laboring side of the population, who, of course, is every bit as interested in tax policy as is the business side. So in order to make the representation a little broader and a little deeper, I wanted to recommend to you that you add these two individuals to be appointed by the Governor--a representative of organized labor, and a