

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

May 5, 2005

LB 425

small amount, but the court is not being the recipient of the amount of General Fund money I think it should have. I don't think any of the court's operations should be based on fees. There should never be cash register justice. But other states have chosen to use that methodology. The court in this state has been given a very strong signal that it's a direction this court should go. I have been the stumbling block as far as increasing fees to an unreasonable level. Over \$1 million will be raised by increasing the fees this year. I didn't want to see that. But being a pragmatist and a practical politician, I will adapt to reality. I plan to review the proposed fee increases to make sure that no more money is being raised than necessary, which would mean fees are not going to be raised any more than is absolutely necessary to get the amount of money that is needed. When you have no fat in your budget, when fees are being raised, I think this is a program that justifies this small amount. I'm telling you there are three items. I've decided to take them individually. But so you'll know what the other two are, the Judicial Qualifications Commission, which is the entity charged with disciplining judges, requires \$61,000 this year, \$63,000 next year. Then there's the Commission on Children which the court is working with and which has done some good work, and the people who sit on that commission have been encouraged to examine the courts, how they handle the cases dealing with children. And they've been told by the Chief Justice himself to be very frank, forthright, don't worry about any repercussions or reprisals, criticize where criticism is needed, don't bite your tongue and don't hold back, because the purpose of this commission is to get at the truth, to properly and accurately draw out the nature of these problems, and then the court is going to address them. Those are the three items, but I'm taking them one at a time. Had the body chosen, I could have brought one amendment. But all it would have told you is the total amount and mentioned page numbers and what would be stricken. These are drafted in that way too. But I'm able to break out the amount of each one of these programs and try to persuade you to fund it. So the first one will provide money for the minority justice task force and it would be to help provide the cost of staffing. Half of that amount is being paid by the Nebraska State Bar Association, one of the few things they have done which I can give them a positive grade for. If