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LB 348

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Stuhr. On with discussion. Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, a lot of work has been done on this bill. I support the bill. I support the amendments, and I came to this position by a long, tortuous, rocky road. I deem myself to be the gatekeeper when it comes to increases in court fees. I have done, during my entire time in the Legislature, all that I could to prevent what I call cash register justice from taking place; namely, supporting the judicial system by way of court fees. It is not a user system. The court system is created by the constitution. The judiciary is the third branch of the three-branch government in this state, and I believe that fees ought not be used to take the place of General Fund appropriations. The courts should be supported through the taxes paid by everybody. However, despite my strenuous opposition to unnecessary increases in court costs, especially...or fees...to fund what I think the General Fund should pay for, I can be shown that a situation has come into being which needs a remedy, and the remedy will probably have to be an increase in various fees. So I met with the Chief Justice, I've talked to Senator Brashear, I've talked to Senator Bourne, and I decided that I would agree to these increases, and when I make an agreement such as this, I will not back away from it. It's very distasteful to me. Another thing I need to comment on, but I think I may wait until I'm recognized, so I'll have enough time to complete that, but a disturbing thing happened that relates to the Legislature itself, and it has become public, so I've got to comment on it. The Chairman of the Executive Board, pursuant to a request from a lobbyist, requested a letter from the Attorney General, an Opinion, as to whether or not this man Hergert could be impeached for conduct preceding his entry into office. First of all, due to, I guess, an overabundance of accommodating, that letter was sent. It was not sent by Senator Engel, as the representative of the Executive Board. The Executive Board was not consulted. I think it was a mistake. The issue is not ripe for an Opinion from the Attorney General. The committee has not voted to send the resolution out here, and even after that has been done, the Legislature must vote to adopt the resolution. So, until that is done, nothing exists in the way of formal action for the