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LB 348

understand it, almost 30 percent, is that correct, 29.66 percent, while the judges, as percent of pay for benefit, is 22.36 percent.

SENATOR STUHR: That's correct, when you add everything together, yes.

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: Now the benefit of the judges' program, or retirement system, there's been, ever since I've served on the Retirement Committee under your leadership, there's been structural problems with that plan, hasn't there?

SENATOR STUHR: Yes, we...there have been lawsuits because one year we asked for an increase in contribution without giving a corresponding increase in benefits, and I'd almost like to have that written in stone that we do not give increase benefits without asking for an increased contribution rate.

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: And as...what is occurring here under LB 348 is we're not requesting that the judges participate monetarily in assisting with their own retirement program, so we're off-loading this to our citizens that go in and pay court fees, under LB 348? The judges aren't participating in the bailout this time, is I guess what I'm trying to get to.

SENATOR STUHR: Well, all...as I stated, all new judges do have to come under the higher contribution rate now. So...and they have the option of either taking the increased benefit and paying the higher contribution rate, or not participating.

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: But in terms of the current deficiencies within the judges retirement system, we have...we have a structural deficiency.

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR STUHR: Yes, we do, and...

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: And LB 348 gives the judges a pass this time, in terms of them stepping up to the plate to help fortify their own retirement program. Isn't that, in essence, what