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LB 348

Synowiecki just came...I'm sorry. You didn't get closed soon enough. Senator Bourne, then Senator Synowiecki.

SENATOR BOURNE: Then I'll waive off, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Bourne waives off his opportunity. Senator Synowiecki.

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: Senator Cudaback, members, it's pretty evident that the amendment is going to be adopted, and I'm not necessarily, you know, fighting it, by any means. I want an effective, and I want an accomplished judiciary, just like everyone else. But I just wanted to make members aware of some of these underlying issues. You need to be cognizant of this. Perhaps on Select File we can look at something, to look at and examine our judiciary's compensation as a whole, and not just salaries. While it's true they bypassed raises last biennium, they in fact received an enhancement to their retirement program. And while it's true they may rank, in studies, in the middle of the pack relative to states, you know, I think as part...again, as part of that examination, and as part of that analysis, you have to take into account the retirement benefits, the compensation as a whole. And I bring this to the body as a member of the Retirement Committee, and that you need to vote as an informed voter on these kind of issues. We're talking about, in the state of Nebraska, a district court judge whose salary compensation is at or around \$110,000 a year, and again, if they're fully vested in the retirement program, upon retirement, they receive a retirement benefit, a defined benefit, in excess of \$70,000 a year. You just need to know that, that that's what you're voting on here. And are we at a critical mass at this time, where we're not attracting accomplished attorneys to the judiciary? I don't think we are. I think we are getting individuals applying for these positions that are quite accomplished and have quite a bit of experience relative to what is needed to become an effective judge. I just bring this to the body so that you know what's going on, so that you can be informed of the benefits relative to this, so that you can be informed relative to these court fees that indeed, we're going to rely upon, a court fee put upon those individuals that access our judiciary system, many of whom are poor, quite frankly. And