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LB 348

constitutional officers. Secondly, this was discussed much on General File. We have in the state of Nebraska three groups of employees that fall under a defined benefit retirement plan. These three are our teachers, our troopers within the State Patrol, and our judges. Each of these plans, all three of them, due to the problematic stock market in the past few years, have some deficiencies in their program, in their retirement program. All three plans are experiencing spreadsheet difficulties, but only one, only one of these--and that would be the judges--is one in which the employees are not directly monetarily participating in the solution. Under the parameters of LB 348, it is our constituents that access our court system through fees that will solve the imbalances relative to the retirement program. The judges, in fact, because they're receiving an increase in pay under LB 348, will receive an enhancement in the retirement benefit, because their retirement is based upon their salary at...their departing salary, relative to their benefits with retirement. So it's only one, and that would be the judges, are not personally, actively, rank and file, if you will, participating monetarily in solving the imbalances relative to that retirement program. And I'd rather, in the essence of time, not get into a long-winded debate relative to our retirement plans and so forth. I'm trying to keep this on fundamental principles, and the fundamental principle being that the judges are not participating monetarily in solving the deficiencies in the retirement program, while our troopers and our teachers are. I should also note that this amendment leaves intact the enhanced contribution from the fees to the judges' retirement program. So Senator Stuhr, this in no way, shape, or form--this amendment--impacts what we are contributing, again, through our citizens accessing the court system, providing for a solution to the retirement benefit inefficiencies within the system. I should also note that I don't think...I want just as badly as some of the other members of the Legislature a strong, an effective, and a deliberate judiciary. There's no doubt about it, it's a critical ingredient to our system of government. But I think we can take a time out here relative to these raises. I think this can be safely done. I don't think we're at critical mass in attracting accomplished attorneys, practicing attorneys, to the judiciary. I know for a fact in the rural communities throughout the Nebraska, this is a very,