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LB 348

Friend, would you check in, please. Senator Preister. The house is under call. Senator Engel, also. Senator Brashear. Senator Synowiecki, if you wish to...as you know, your time is rolling.

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: Yes. Thank you, Senator Cudaback, members. I very much appreciate the discussion. I very much appreciate the opportunity to bring this alternative to the members. I respect the work of the Judiciary Committee in terms of what they did, although I think it's a bit flawed. I think the collective bargaining agreement that the state enters into is relative to salaries that are substantially below that of judges. It's essentially for workers that are earning, you know, starting wages in the range of \$23,000 to \$25,000, an average range of \$30,000 to \$35,000. And the judges' salaries are far, far outside that scope, in terms of salaries. And that if the judges would have been taken into consideration as a group, we would not be looking at 3 and 3.25 salary increases, "percentagely" speaking. Secondly, we got three members within the state that are under a defined benefit retirement plan. We've got teachers, our hardworking teachers throughout the state; State Patrol officers, our troopers; and the judges. Two of those three will be monetarily participating through membership contributions to help solve the insolvency problems within their retirement plans. The judges are not. The judges will be receiving that from citizens, our constituents that access the court system, that that solvency issue will be taken place, and that the judges themselves will not be participating in that. I simply wanted to give the body an alternative to take a look at this. We would delay the salary increases. We can come back next year after consultation with Senator Stuhr and the Retirement Committee, you know, to take a look at this. You know, I know what I'm up against here. (Laugh) I've got the powerful and distinguished Chair of the Judiciary Committee, the honorable Patrick Bourne, against me on this. I've got the distinguished Speaker of the Legislature against me on this. I've got the senior member of the Legislature, Senator Chambers is against me on this. It's really, truly, the elite and the powerful of the legislative branch, against me, representing south Omaha. But they really do...they really are doing something...I'm going to tell you, seriously, they're doing