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LR 12

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Smith.

SENATOR SMITH: That's correct. Thank you, Mr. President and members. AM1649 has two basic components. It says that the salary of the Legislature shall not exceed the federal poverty level for a family of four. And the other component is that any benefit...that senators may participate in benefit programs, not to exceed that of state employee benefit programs. And I seek to be very straightforward on this, and also add to the discussion the information that Senator Pederson (phonetic) handed out earlier, coincidentally, that shows that poverty level, federal poverty level for a family of four is \$19,350 this year. It is similar to the last amendment. It is my objective to provide an identify to a number that is more than just a 50 percent increase or what have you, or consumer price index. I think that the public may look "disfavorably" on some of those. And so that is why I seek to present this. If it seems to not be so popular in the body, I'll certainly be mindful of that. But again, I think it is a straightforward approach that does provide some useful information and identity to the numbers suggested. I urge a positive response to AM1649.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Smith. You've heard the opening on AM1649 to LR 12CA. Open for discussion. Senator Chambers, followed by Senator Schimek.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. President, that last vote was not wise, in my opinion. It's going to take 30 votes to get it on the ballot. Any time there is something other than a specific amount, the public, in my opinion, is not going to vote for it. They will feel there is some trickery going on, because they have never shown an inclination to allow the Legislature to have a salary increase without it coming by way of a vote. If there's anything the public seems to understand--I emphasize the word "seems"--it's the fact that legislators cannot obtain a salary increase without there being an amendment to the constitution upon which the public can vote. There may not be 30 votes for anything here. But that last will be wasted if you get 25 votes. I'd like to ask Senator Schimek a question.