

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

May 24, 2005

LR 12

And I do like the citizen aspect of it, which, we never should raise it to the point where you could...this is all you have to do to make your living, because then you lose the aspect of having a citizen legislature. However, I mentioned this one time at a function, and I was talking to a gentleman from Louisiana, and I'd just finished reading the book on Huey Long. And I was making comments to this...he's a legislator in Louisiana, and he said, yes, he said, we have the best politicians in Louisiana money can buy. Well, so perhaps that's what we have here, too. I got an e-mail from one of my constituents two years ago. He was disgruntled over something, which is fine. There's nothing wrong with that, in not agreeing with what you do. But here's what he accused me of. He says, you legislators down there, you get in your new Cadillacs and you go down to your country club, your country club, every noon and have your three-martini lunches, and et cetera, et cetera, on those big dollars you're making. So at that point in time, they just come out with our pay stubs, showing what our hourly rate is. How it's calculated I don't know. But I just sent him back a copy of this. It says, regular pay, so many hours, and the rate, 5 dollars and 76.9 cents an hour. So I sent this back to that gentleman. I said, now, dear sir, thank you for your concerns, but if you can show me how I can buy a new Cadillac, how I can pay country club dues, and how I can afford three-martini lunches on this salary, please call me back collect, because I'm very interested in living that lifestyle. And I never heard from him again. So in other words, I think it's perception, perception. People out there don't realize what little we are making, and what our expenses are. And I think if they finally figure that out, but it's going to take some selling on our part and other people's part to tell...to show them that we are not making those big dollars. We're down here as...we're down here to serve. And that's why we're here. Because you're not doing it for the money. It's definitely not for the money. But I think to open up the door for more people who can afford to serve, I do think we have to raise the salaries. Thank you.

SENATOR BAKER: Thank you, Senator Engel. (Visitors introduced.) Next speaker, Senator Erdman.