

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

May 24, 2005

LR 12

tied into a situation, because I think that's what the public expects and that's what the public likes, is, well, we get to set your salary. Just like we get to set the Governor's salary, we get to set the judges' salaries. Those are part of the process. Those are the checks and balances. So I believe that setting the number in statute, saying, this is what the number is going...or, in the constitution, this is what the number is going to be, is something that the public expects. When the voters go, they want to know what we think we're worth. Now, that is what the debate is going to be, until we come up to some resolution that can either get 30 votes to put it on the ballot, or, if Senator Schimek's idea is more appropriate, getting 40 to put it on the primary ballot. That's going to be our discussion. And it can't be devoid of what the public thinks. We can't say, oh, you know what, we're worth what Lancaster County commissioners are worth, 32 grand, plus benefits. They're not going to vote for that. They flat-out are not going to vote for that. And the constituents that contact me, that say, well, you guys aren't worth \$24,000, I bring up the question, I say, have you asked what your county commissioners make? An individual from Cheyenne County was complaining to me about that. Those individuals make \$16,500; the county chair makes \$17,682, plus full family healthcare, full family. Add another \$8,000-\$10,000 maybe on top of that. So we're not comparing apples and oranges, and we're not the same as a county board, and we're not the same as a city council position. But if you're from my neck of the woods and you have to travel six months down here, you bet, you're going to get some expenses, and they're going to cover your costs,...

SENATOR BAKER: One minute.

SENATOR ERDMAN: ...if that. So when we're comparing apples and apples, and I go home and I talk about what's fair, the general public gets it. The question is, they want to know if we get what they want us to put on the ballot. And that is a number. And that has been what's successful. And I think that's where this body should gauge, because of previous success. I think that's where we needed to head. Whether Senator Schimek is right, whether it's \$24,000 or not, I was there in the committee, I was there with the bill on General File, I think