

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

January 26, 2006 LB 529

and benefit packages should be in some rough relationship. I have not heard adversely from any lawyer on this proposition. I think, by and large, they understand the management function and responsibility that the court system has, and I think they are now comfortable. In the early days, many years ago, there was bar opposition to this bill. I don't know how they feel about court fees still today, but I'm pretty sure they're comfortable with the mechanics of the bill, with the structure of the bill, with what the bill proposes in all of its substantive elements. And I have heard no opposition from the county judges. So we have one central source of opposition, and that is NACO, the Association of County Officials. They have had a very organized campaign to get all of the counties to send all of you letters, basically talking about, one, unfunded mandates and, two, local control. And I will eventually address those items directly because I think that neither are valid arguments. And I'm very anxious today to hear what those arguments are, because I'm hoping and I believe that I could convince you that what this bill proposes is a far, far better place to be than where we are. With respect to the unfunded mandate argument, it's curious that that argument should be made, because the state is picking up the costs of the salaries and the benefits of the clerks of the district court and all of their employees. And we can demonstrate...

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: One minute.

SENATOR BEUTLER: ...that, on the whole, and we, before the end of this process, will be able to demonstrate that in every instance the counties are relieved of expenses, not mandated into additional expenses. The counties...this is property tax relief, on the whole, at the level of about \$6 million. Additionally, to be sure that the counties gain financially out of this, there's \$1 million being distributed to the counties for indigent defense costs. So the counties will financially benefit and I think I can prove that to you. I have no more time at this moment, and I haven't really gotten into a description of the bill at all and I will...

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Time, Senator Beutler.