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SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Lieutenant Governor and members of the Legislature, let me start taking you through the bill. I indicated to you that, by virtue of picking up the personnel costs of the clerks of the district court employees that property tax relief, if the counties choose to have it be property tax relief, in the amount of about \$6 million will come about; plus, the counties will be helped in terms of legitimate...or in terms of indigent defense money. But the reason that the counties have this expense relief is because, as I indicated earlier, we do take into the state system the clerks themselves and all of the employees of the clerk of the district court offices. And so their salaries and all of their benefits will be payments from the state level. It will be state General Funds and also...well, they will be entirely state General Funds, but part of that General Fund expense is offset by \$2 in court fees. In making this transition, no clerk and no employee of the clerk's office will have their salary reduced. All will have immediate access to the state health and retirement options. Many, by virtue of the change, will have better benefits; a few, frankly, may have benefits that are not quite so good. Again, understand that we're dealing with 93 different situations. But as I indicated to you before, I think that equity will be well-served by treating all of the employees of the clerks of the district court offices across the state in some more uniform way in terms of salary and benefits because, in fact, they are doing the same work, just in different geographic locations. Equity and fairness will also be served by treating the employees of the clerks of the district court similar to the employees of the clerks of the county court. Remember again the anomaly of this system. The clerks and the employees of the clerks of the county courts are all state employees right now. So they are under a unified pay system, a pay...a scaled pay system, and it would make a lot of sense, because they do the same kind of work as the clerks of the district court, to have some parity and some reasonable relationship between those two sets of employees. The transition of the offices from county employment to the state system would be done in three stages. On January 15 of next year, Districts 8, 10, 11, and 12, generally speaking, starting at the western end of the state, would come on to the state