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on who resigned, or if the office was open, it would probably be the existing county court magistrate now that would assume those duties. Is that correct?

SENATOR BEUTLER: Yeah. If I...if you...with your permission, let me back up a little bit,...

SENATOR BAKER: That's fine.

SENATOR BEUTLER: ...because many people, especially those who come from Omaha and Lincoln, may not understand that there are ex officio clerks out there. And basically, about a third of our counties, I think, have ex officio clerks. And an ex officio clerk is one that's not elected and not appointed by the judges, but basically chosen by the county. The ex officio clerk is usually part-time, although in some strange situations out there the ex officio clerk seems to have hired somebody else to do the actual work, and so there's even one degree additional removal from accountability in this system that exists out there now in some places. With respect to a potential merger, there are two different situations, under the bill. If you have an ex officio, then in that case, if there's a local plan, merger can occur at any point in time under the bill, if you have the local plan and if it's an ex officio. It's not required to happen at all. If the judges in that particular area don't think the public is better served by a change, then the system will remain essentially the same. If you don't have an ex officio but you have an elected clerk, then merger is also possible, but it's not possible until one of the two positions is vacated. In that instance, the position that is still filled, whether it's on the district court side or the county court side, becomes, if a local plan recommends a merger, becomes the clerk of the courts, plural. And so you have one position for clerk of the courts.

SENATOR BAKER: Okay. My next question or concern that I'm hearing from citizens and ex officio clerks out there is, they obviously,...

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: One minute.