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FLOOR DEBATE

January 26, 2006 LB 529

most relied on property taxes, to now about the 14th or 15th state in the union. That is, we, as a proportion of our entire tax burden with respect to our citizenry, as a proportion of that, property taxes are going down and sales and income taxes are financing a larger and larger share of the overall government effort, state and local. So this bill...and you can tie it down more closely to tax relief if that's what you would like to do. That's fine with me. I left that open. But if you want more tax...property tax relief, this bill is a good mechanism to do that. And I don't think that we should shy away from this bill because it's giving property tax relief. That's a good thing. How much time do I have left, Mr. Lieutenant Governor?

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: 1, 05.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Okay. I want to go on to a different topic, but I think I will stop at that point.

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Okay.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Thank you.

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Senator Smith.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Mr. President, members. I think this is a very relevant discussion that we are having, and I certainly hope to contribute a little bit. When I look at the fees, I must say that I agree with some of the statements made earlier, that our court system should not be funded so heavily by fees. The court system is for everyone, and is certainly, I think, very relevant to General Fund expenditures and General Fund support. The \$5 increase in the fees is a pretty hefty increase. And when we look at that increase coupled with the fiscal policies of the 93 counties across the state and their personnel policies and who shares what jobs...and I have to say that I believe they're getting the job done right now. And could the system be better? Probably. I just hesitate to say that this is the right answer. It was ironic when we heard that in a county, the county board, the ultimate budget authority in a county, would be opposed to this, when the most affected party