

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

February 15, 2006 LB 188

it again, you're welcome to come over and I will share the copy I have with me. Having said that on procedure, I hope that's fairly clear to you, let me start in on a discussion of the bill. And one of the things that struck me last night was how sports-minded this state is, how much we appreciate athleticism and the glory and the aesthetics of sport. And you know, one of the things that I think we so highly value in the Midwest in sport is the fair playing field. One of the key ingredients of any sports contest is that the rules are fair to both sides. If you, in a basketball game, just decided that one side gets two free throws for every foul and the other side gets four free throws for every foul, nobody would even consider accepting such a rule. It just wouldn't be fair. And yet, in something that's far more important than sports, in elections, we say one side can have all the money it needs to blitz the constituency four times, and the other person may have resources to blitz the constituency only twice. Well, on average, by and large, although there are exceptions, obviously the person who can do it more often, and the greater the advantage is in that regard, the more likely they are to win. If money is not controlled in some way in politics, it is not a fair playing field. In sports contests, we don't go back and try to correct the things that come to...the players that come to the game, for example. One team may be taller than the other and have some advantage. We know we can't go back that far and make everything perfectly right. Likewise, in politics, this law doesn't try to go back and make everybody perfectly equal that's coming into the election process. But it does say, just as we say in our sports games, once you get on the playing field, we want to make it, as best we can, a fair playing field. And that's what the Campaign Finance Limitation Act purports to do, and I think that that's what it does do. Let's look for a moment at some of the criteria by which you might judge whether the Campaign Limitation Act is successful or not. I would argue that it's been wildly successful. Let me cite two or three things. First of all, the basic thrust of and the basic primary goal of the act is not to reduce campaign costs. That's not the basic goal. But that is an important by-product of what happens when you have a law like this. The Campaign Act came into operation in the '96 elections for the first time. There have been five election cycles since then. And I want to ask you to look at