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FLOOR DEBATE

April 10, 2006 LB 529

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Beutler, you're recognized to open.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature, I think you all will recall that in January we had a very good discussion about LB 529. LB 529 essentially is that final piece of integration into the state judicial system. When the state...as the state judicial system progressed, it became more and more an integrated whole. We took in the county courts and they became part of the state-administered system, and we took in the municipal courts and they became a part of one system, and then we picked up the cost of the clerks of the county court and they became a part of the judicial system. Now this one last piece sits out there, and that is picking up and taking into the system the clerks of the district court. I've passed out several things to you, and I'll try to go and reference them as I go along a little bit, and I'll try to refresh your memory a little bit. But I basically would like to get to your questions and tell you what we've done in response to the debate in January. Let me also remind you that this bill is supported by all organizations in the state that have an interest in it. It's not opposed by anybody, but I cannot, despite a whole number of accommodations over the years, and including some more this year, I cannot get NACO on board with this, so that is the one remaining group that is out there in opposition. Having said that, I think what you told me on the first debate on General File in January were...I think it was three things. First of all, you indicated that you didn't want this bill supported by court fees, and so we've taken out the two cents of court fees that supported this bill, and the bill is now funded entirely by General Funds. The second thing I heard you saying is that you don't want the entire \$8.5 million cost of this to come down in the next year, or the next two or three years; and so the second and the biggest thing, the biggest change we've made with this in response to the debate, is to string out the integration of the clerks' offices one at a time in each judicial district; that is, we're taking one judicial district at a time. There are 12 judicial districts, so we're taking them one at a time over 12 years, and that way the cost can be accommodated without one sudden impact upon the budget. I've passed out to you a sheet that shows the 12 judicial districts, it shows the order in which they would be taken in, and it shows