

years LB 923 which increased the judges salaries in general but as we went along passing the bill, we decided to take out any reference to county judges for two reasons. First, because of the fact that the merit plan for county judges was before the Legislature which has since passed and been signed by the Governor, secondly, since the four year term currently being served by the county judges would not end until January 1, 1977, there was no need to consider any pay bill. So, it was not considered. However, it was stated at that time that there would be a bill in this 1975 session which is LB 141. Just a few matters to bring to your attention before we take up Senator Cavanaugh's amendment, that is that the requirements of your county judges and 43 of them in 21 districts in this state, that the requirements are the same they are identical to that of the district judges. I think we forget this sometimes. The fact that all county judges are now lawyers, that they cannot practice law, that they, with the exception of Lincoln and Omaha, or Douglas and Lancaster Counties, they serve more then one county. The fact that their civil jurisdiction was increased from 1,000 dollars to 5,000 dollars under the court reformed plan, and that the criminal jurisdiction was increased, was almost doubled. The fact that the county judge now in the many trials which are now held in this, what used to be called the lower court of the inferior court, or the court of limited jurisdiction, this judge must now be qualified to rule upon the admissibility of evidence and conduct trials so that there will not be any error, must give jury instruction to avoid such error and so all of the requisites of a trial judge of the district court level apply to the county judge. Outside of Lancaster, and this is something that you outstate should consider, outside of Lancaster and Douglas counties, the County Court now has exclusive jurisdiction, exclusive for original jurisdiction of all juvenile cases. The obvious reason being that in Omaha and Lincoln there is a separate juvenile court. The County Court outside of Lincoln and Omaha also is responsible for the supervision of all such juveniles. The County Judge has authority to construct wills which prior to the Court Reform Act, 1032, did not exist. The code of judicial conduct will now allow a judge to have any outside employment, let alone that of practicing law as I mentioned earlier. And then, probably one of the most important things that you should consider, the jurisdiction, I've already talked about the jurisdictional abilities of these judges, the importance of these judges, but the most important thing, for those of you throughout the state, is to remember that the County Judge for all practical purposes is the judge who administers the legal system in his respective community. Eighty to ninety percent, maybe higher then that in most cases, are handled by the county court. This is because formerly we had JP's, we had city magistrates, we had city-county courts, we had 93 different county courts. Now, these are all handled by the 43 judges in 21 districts. When LB 1032 was first introduced the salary of the County Judge was at that time within the 2,000 dollar differential from district judges, which was and has been throughout the years but since that time, the district judges salaries has increased a couple of times, and as I mentioned to you, the last reason being because of the fact that we deliberately left them out of the bill last year through the reasons mentioned.