

benefits for state legislators. So, again, I rise in support of LR 27.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Wehrbein, followed by Senators Pedersen, Jensen and Vrtiska.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, members, I rise in opposition to this legislative constitutional amendment proposal. I'm not so opposed to having the people vote on it, but perhaps they should, but since I'm opposed to really the idea behind this, I will oppose this. I feel that we are properly and legitimately a citizen Legislature, that it doesn't necessarily follow that the compensation should be what it is for constitutional officers that are already full time and it takes a complete time out of their career and whatever they're doing in order to serve as Governor or whatever they serve at. That is not the case in the case of legislators. We, historically, at least, we have intended to be part-time, that we have time that we actually need to earn a living in most cases outside the body. I think that is proper that we have somewhat limited compensation. I'm not saying that it is perhaps not adequate in many...it is probably inadequate in many cases, but I believe extending these rewar...these rewards, if you will, or more compensation, broadening that is really not the way that we should approach this. With term limits, it may make some difference. I understand that. I do...I would be very opposed, for example, if health insurance were offered. I think there would be a temptation to carry that on beyond the time that you're in the body, for example. I just simply feel that it's not right in a citizen Legislature, perhaps, in Nebraska to do this. In other states, perhaps it is being done. The comparison was here made to Congress, perhaps it could be made a point that that is a problem with our Congress, that many are, at this point, serving in Congress in Washington, D.C., for the sake of the job rather than for the sake of serving. I just simply feel that our philosophy should be that we are serving the public. We are serving our constituents. This is what we are here for. Eight years is not that long a time if we are going to have term limits that someone could sacrifice if we are really here for that reason. It isn't something that I particularly want to take issue with those of you that feel that it may be important. I'm not...I'm not going to say that that's not a legitimate concern, I'm just saying that philosophically I think we would be heading down the wrong path if we start raising the compensation for this that one thing will lead to