

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

January 29, 1997 LB 131

thinks that we are on the up-and-up or not. Now that's an unfortunate circumstance. It's a pained truth, but I think it is so. Why? Because of perhaps the faults of the past, perhaps of the faults of the present, and perhaps of the overwinning suspicion of a public who says the best attitude toward government is simply to be skeptical, that I won't bother to learn about it, I won't bother to get to know it, I'll just adopt a hands-off, aloof, alienated skepticism of government, what's it done for me lately, and isn't it all a rigged deal. And this bill and bills like it will not persuade that kind of person to change their mind. Those are articles of faith, and in fact the alienation is a form of...it may be their description of the world. My reading of it is that it relieves them of reading the newspapers. It relieves them of learning about government. It relieves them of writing us or coming to our hearings, because it gives them the greatest excuse in the world, it doesn't make a difference, we don't count, it's a fixed game, so why bother. To me it's the biggest rationalization in the world, but it's there. It's documentable, polls will tell us this. If we do not have a known body of abuse that we're chasing, I think it's a lost effort, lost effort to try to appear above suspicion of a skeptical, alienated public. It is a goal you cannot achieve. It is a...it is an exercise for which you will have very little result. Let me tell you where I think we can do something. If you change, if you have significant public financing of campaigns, that might make a difference. If you had significant resources that were dumped as a public service into campaigns where they weren't bought but they were given, that might make a difference. I accept Senator Maurstad's idea of no cash and full disclosure, as being helpful so that you can catch real abuses. Catching abuses and punishing them would be helpful, that would be a good thing, but trying to appear above suspicion will not work. The public is too far gone in their assessment of the current situation so that a gesture like this is regarded as being meaningful. What it will engender, however, is a series of strategies to get around it and the very strategies to get around it will therefore create another body of evidence that it's a rigged game. See, you didn't do it between January and May, but let's take a look at December. My God, what a whole lot of fund raisers in December. Why was that? To get around the rule. Well, there you are. Look at all these fund