

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

February 12, 1999 LB 350

others are also making adequate provision for the compensation of those who service in our judicial branch of government. I urge the advancement of the bill. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Brashear. For discussion on the advancement of LB 350, Chair recognizes Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, in the past I have supported of this kind, and in the past I have opposed them very strenuously. When I looked at the makeup of what I refer to as the new court, I applied the term "Renaissance court" to that collection of people. They are knowledgeable and learned in the law, their backgrounds indicate that they are up to doing the work of Supreme Court judges. I would never say don't agree to a salary increase because of a disagreement with a specific decision. There are decisions that have been handed down in the past with which I disagreed, but they were the kind where people will not see eye-to-eye on them. However, when I detected what to me seemed to be an unwillingness for the Chief Justice and others, who had a position where they could help weed out those judges who ought not to be judges, when I saw an unwillingness to do that, I was not of a mind to continue voting increases for people who served as judges and did not function as judges should. It meant that their inappropriate conduct was being rewarded and no action was being taken to try to protect the judiciary by purifying it through the removal of those who caused such detriment. I'm sure that the current court, collectively, will hand down decisions with which I disagree. I wish they would not. And, if they were as knowledgeable in the law and as sensitive to the function of a Supreme Court, as I am, never would they hand down a decision with which I disagree. But it takes people a while to reach that level of understanding, competence and excellence, and I believe in according that time to people who are sincerely trying. We should not hold down salaries when we're looking at an agency from the institutional point. I feel the same way about the salary of various executive officials with whom I will disagree to a much greater extent than I will with the court. But in this society the value accorded a position is measured in terms of how the one holding that position is compensated. We should never be so penurious or so vengeful that we will cripple