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(Start Belt #4)

this salary increase, would be the legislature of the state of Nebraska, and yet the people that are affected by it are county officials in county government, it would seem proper that the county officials, the supervisors who are elected by the people bear the responsibility of moving up or down the salaries of those working for them. They have the expertise and the knowledge, certainly more than we do. To have us set the salaries would be very equivalent I would think, to having for example the county officials set the legislative clerk salary, or employees here in this chamber. It's not unlike that at all for us to be walking in and determining without expertise and knowledge, what fields, salaries of these county employees should be. One of the things that hasn't apparently been realized and I think the most important thing about this bill that has not yet been brought up, is the effect it will have upon property tax. Now the Governor and every member of this body probably has at one time or another made statements to the effect that we are not going to increase property taxes, property taxes are too high, we are going to find property tax relief, well the direct effect of this bill would be to significantly increase property taxes, and when the issue came up the county officials would quite properly say, well the legislature did it, and the legislature would say we didn't pass any property tax increase, but the very simple fact is, it is a property tax increase. Salaries of county officials and county employees amount to about 30% on the average across the state of Nebraska, of the total county budget. We're talking about a 25% increase, in this 30% of the county budget. In property taxes, reduce the simple figures on a average across Nebraska this would mean, I hope you will make note of this fact, about a minimum of 6% increase in the county property taxes. Now I cannot in good conscience vote for a 6% increase in county property taxes, and that is exactly what voting for the bill as it is now would do, if there is going to be this increase, then it should be done by the officials that have the responsibility which is the county board, and we should turn by law this responsibility back to them that we took away from them a couple of years ago. This legislature is known for its accountability for us to be interfering with setting county officials salaries is a direct repudiation of the accountability we are supposed to be so well known for. I don't think that we can go on indirectly, acting and increasing property taxes and then speaking out of the other side of our mouths and saying we aren't doing it, or we aren't going to increase property taxes, because that is what this bill will do. Now I would like to point out one other thing, possibly this idea of always adding a 25% increase here or there in salaries is the wrong approach. and I give you as an example Arthur County, just as one county, I could use McPherson, Blaine, Grant or any of the others, but Arthur County is a good example. Arthur County has a population of 638 people, the Clerk there receives \$7,200.00, that's better than \$10.00 per person for the Clerk's salary, the treasurer receives \$7,200.00, sheriff \$5,500.00, superintendent \$5,500.00 county attorney \$5,500.00. With a population of 638 people I think just directly increasing salaries is not the reasonable approach in 1973. Possibly we should be looking to something so that Arthur, McPherson, Blaine and Grant, or a series of counties would have a county clerk, or county treasurer. It is not reasonable to presume that 638 people in a county where land is pretty much owned by families and very little land changes hands that there is that much work for the clerk, and treasurer and this type of thing. So I would have to encourage you to adopt this amendment and state that if you reject the amendment and go with the raise as proposed, that you are today by pushing the green button, to go along with that raise, directly increasing the property taxes of every tax payer in the state of Nebraska, and that the average would be about a 6% increase in the county, property taxes in Nebraska. I cannot in good conscience do that after declaring that I'm trying to hold the line on property taxes.