

February 7, 1980

LB 628

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Nichol, do you wish to speak to the Vickers amendment.

SENATOR NICHOL: Yes, Mr. Chairman, please. Mr. Chairman, several years ago we said to the county assessors, you must pass a test, and they have to pass a test. That is in addition to what other county officials, elected county officials, have to do, but at that time and most of us were not in the Legislature at that time, they did not say you must set this assessor's salary at a higher amount or this amount because they are required to do additional things. I agree with this bill for the most part. I think it is good for the most part but we are starting something here where we are saying to the counties we are going to dictate to you what one elected official shall receive in the way of salary. We didn't have the sheriff's okay or blessing until this year. Why didn't we have it? Because never before have we addressed the problem of sheriffs being underpaid. I personally think that sheriffs are for the most part underpaid. I believe the one in my county is underpaid and I think he is doing a good job, but I still think as far as salary is concerned, he is underpaid. So first of all, I think we should decide, are we going to start the business of dictating to counties what they are going to pay their elected officials. Secondly, if we are going to put them at the level that is suggested in this bill, we are going to trigger a big fight among elected county officials. It is coming. Now we have said to counties your mill levy limit is 14.28 and we have also said to counties seven percent is it. All right, here we are saying to counties you are going to expend this much money which is certainly way above seven percent in my area and for the most part across the state it is more than seven percent or eight percent. It looks to me at a quick brush that this would be in the neighborhood of fifty to a hundred percent increase in many counties. I don't know what counties ought to be paying their sheriffs but we are usurping the authority again from counties as to what they should be doing. One of the reasons I ran for the Legislature was because I saw as a county commissioner the Legislature repeatedly saying to counties, this is the law. You are going to fund it. We are not going to do anything about the funding. Now my last point is this, if we are going to dictate what this salary shall be, then let us take the responsibility of seeing that it is funded. Senator Chambers, you should be interested. If we are going to set the salaries at this rate, lets this Legislature face it and say we are going to take the responsibility for raising taxes, for raising expenditures way beyond the

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