

SENATOR HIGGINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I compliment Senator Smith on her first maiden speech in the Legislature. Forgetting the freshman senators and the mess we have around here with desks in the hall and trying to assign offices, I would like to remind the body that we came down here in 1984 in December for a two-day seminar. One of the purposes of it was to give the freshmen or the new senators one day to teach them about the Legislature, where the Fiscal Analyst's office is, what they can learn, and to tell them how the Legislature functions as opposed to what they might have been led to believe. Now the senators that are objecting to this are saying, well, those of us that live way, way far away would have to come in for just ten days and go back. So my suggestion is this, instead of starting the day that Senator Wesely says, make it two days before. You can then have your committee chairmen reports, which we had this year, December 12. You can also have your freshman senators take their seminar. When they go home with the rule book, they will be a little bit more aware of how things really work around here. Maybe they will be smarter than we want them to be, those of us who have been here for four years. But really it is not a very strong argument to say, well, we don't want to come down here for ten days when we live so far away and then come back. You come down here for two days in December and spend one day listening to committee reports. And let's face it, senators, what we come down here primarily for is to lobby for chairmanships. So here you have got two days extra. You are going to get paid your per diem the day we actually start the session. You are going to get paid your mileage for when you come down for the regular seminar. So we are really not asking you to come down in December for just two days and then go all the way home. We are just saying, give the new senators a chance to learn the makeup of the Legislature, how it operates, give them those couple of weeks to go home and study the rules and think about what they have learned in the seminar and give the legislative staff the opportunity to have a couple of weeks to organize the offices so that when a new senator comes down here he isn't treated as if he were any different than the rest of us who have been here four to twelve, to fifteen years. They are a senator in their own right. They deserve to have an office the day we start legislation and I think it is only fair to them. But the argument to come down here for ten days, to come such a great distance, just doesn't hold water when you come down