

January 8, 1986

to know that we have that integrity, but I think we also have to recognize the context in which we are deciding this. Number one, we do have expenses now paid for and so there is that linkage of expenses being paid for in this code of conduct. If we have our meals and our travel paid for, then why should we have meals free of charge by lobbyists and dinners, and what have you? There is a linkage and it is a logical one, but that is a narrow context versus the larger context I would urge you to consider. That larger context says that our Legislature is paid less than almost any Legislature but I think one or two other states. We are underpaid and overworked and I think we all know that but the public at large does not. As a result of that inequity and unfairness, it leaves me to be concerned about this proposal and I would like to see an attempt to merge the code of conduct with the question of salary because they have to be considered hand in hand. Now, we have merged the issue of code of conduct with expenses but that still doesn't recognize the fact that in our state we are paid probably at the best, in terms of expenses and salary, around 10,000 to \$12,000. Yet you will find other states are always in the range of 20 to 25 to \$30,000 in terms of that compensation and with the long days and hours we have been putting in more and more over the years, it seems to me that this problem is getting worse, not better. We have not had a salary increase since 1968. There is no hope in the near future to get a salary increase and I think we need to tread very carefully on this area. So I guess my proposal is to consider merging the code of conduct with the salary increase proposal to let people know the problems that we have with salary and to recognize the fact that the integrity of this body is paramount to all of us and that by merging the two we clearly show the public the concerns that we have about the situation and I would like to suggest rather than merging or moving forward just with the code of conduct the context is important and we are not dealing with that and so I would suggest to Senator Beutler somehow working it in with the other issues that we are all concerned about in terms of salary and compensation in the Legislature.

PRESIDENT: Senator DeCamp. Next is Senator Chambers.

SENATOR DECAMP: Mr. President and members, I would like to talk a minute about the Nebraska Legislature. It has been suggested that the credibility of the Legislature may not be