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The Town Talk

House rejects 'glass pockets' amendments

BATON ROUGE -- Senate amendments to legislation requiring elected officials to show how much money they make go a bit too far, the House said Tuesday.

In asking the House to reject the Senate amendments to HB730, Rep. Michael Jackson, D-Baton Rouge, said Senate language requiring "detailed" income reporting is vague and leaves it open to interpretation by the state Board of Ethics, which would be charged with enforcing the law.

Also, Jackson said, the income reporting brackets inserted by the Senate, although "not that bad in my opinion," caused problems for some House members.

The House-approved version called for reporting income in two brackets, above or below \$10,000. The Senate had several different brackets that senators said would be a clearer representation of how much people actually make.

Jackson said that by sending the bill to a conference committee, the "vague" language could be clarified and new brackets could be inserted.

He said the committee would "look at Alabama and Washington," where income is reported in four brackets.

The bill requires income reporting by legislators and their spouses, statewide elected officials, local government office holders and candidates for those offices.

The House voted 94-1 to send the bill to conference committee.

(Mike Hasten)