

That is one the Governor has discussed. I have discussed it with him. I have discussed it with a number of other legislators. They would still end up with a 1.5 percent increase. Remember, the increase in the budget now is 3 percent. They would still end up with a 1.5 percent increase. So maybe I should phrase it this way. This amendment is a 1.5 percent increase for state employees, public employees, instead of a 3 percent increase. That's it.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Warner, then Senator Beutler.

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President, I would rise to oppose reducing the adjustment for state employees' salaries. As a matter of fact, I am perfectly comfortable with the budget in total as it is on 722. So...but the issue here is one that we seem to historically do. If you want to freeze state employees at 1.5 percent, I would suggest that you also put an amendment on that prohibits any governmental subdivision from receiving any state funds unless their salary policy does not exceed that that you use for the state. It would seem reasonable. When I read in the paper of 5, 6, 7 percent increases while we are reducing property tax...or state funds, rather, for property tax on top of that, at least some of you are, and we did 1 percent, I think that is the wrong course to go. I don't know what problems...in a sense, I don't...I am almost hoping that some of you succeed. There is a certain amount of pleasure coming back here next year and give you an "I told you so" speech, and if there wasn't so damn much damage, why it would be worth just letting you do it. But I would hope you would reject this amendment.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Wesely, then Senator Sieck. Senator Wesely, do you wish to talk to this? Let's go.

SENATOR WESELY: Yes, I, too, would oppose. Mr. President and members, I would oppose this cutting state employees' salaries. I think Senator Warner said it before, but all you do is delay the increase later. Every year we do a salary survey. We look at how state employees' salaries compare to other salaries similar in terms of their responsibilities and the private sector. We then have a report sent to us and this report this year said 7 percent or something like that. We are only giving them a 3 percent increase. If you don't give them the 3 percent increase,