

will get whipsawed between different categories of public service employees, a story that is older than my tenure in the Legislature and perhaps even maybe older than Senator Warner's tenure in the Legislature, if that's possible. There was the Ice Age and then there was Senator Warner and then there was the Retirement System, I know, but it's possible that even way back then in the Dark Ages that people got whipsawed between these various retirement systems. And we are positioning ourselves to have that happen again unless we take a unified factually based notion of what to do about early retirement. Currently I would be happy to vote on 325 and send it through if I didn't think it had a tortured future ahead of it with those people who want to hang some out of date Christmas ornaments that they forgot to put away come December 26 and still have them hanging around in various pockets of their three piece suits. So, as far as I am concerned, I'll support the Johnson amendment because it keeps for us the ability to make a reasoned judgment about what to do for early retirement and then apply that across the board to public employees. If we create a breach in that system, we will be whipsawed by lots of different groups, not only on this floor now, but before the next election for certain.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Higgins, please. Then Senator Abboud.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Thank you, Mr. President. Would Senator...is Senator Johnson on the floor? Would Senator Johnson answer a couple of questions for me?

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Yes.

SENATOR HIGGINS: I'm not on the Retirement Committee and I confess that I'm a little confused about this bill. First of all, is this mandatory, Senator, or...

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: No, ma'am.

SENATOR HIGGINS: It's not.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: No, it is not, Senator Higgins.

SENATOR HIGGINS: The bill is saying that after five years as a teacher they could retire.