

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

May 1, 2001

LB 305

too much. Conversely, the Legislature may tell local districts if their spending does not cover the financial requirements, so I think that for all of these reasons, the Legislature's constitutional responsibility, the Legislature's creation of local districts, the Legislature's imposition of restrictions on how local districts operate, and the Legislature's determination of what local districts' spending limit should be, the Legislature has a legitimate and compelling responsibility to address teachers salaries.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Time. Senator Raikes, you're recognized to open on the committee amendments.

SENATOR RAIKES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members. I'm going to use this time to provide some detail about the exact proposal, but also a little bit more overview. Let me tell you first about the focus of the committee on the teachers salary issue. The focus is on salaries, certainly beginning salaries because it was believed by the committee that this is a immediate and compelling interest of the state. But as well, we want to focus on veteran teachers salaries. We also want to focus on public schools and we want to focus on equalized targeted funds to public schools. It is the state's, again, constitutional responsibility to provide a quality public school opportunity to all children in the state. Our goal was to make a significant yet affordable address of the situation but also to make sure that it is sustainable. How do we do this? One is to encourage local school districts to address the problem. Second, target state funding to supplement that local effort. Third, require accountability and, fourth, use the state aid formula that is in place. Regarding the implementation, our proposal is such that not every school system in the state would benefit from it instantly, or at least in the first year, but over the long term, longer term, up to three years, every school system will be provided an opportunity. Specifically, there are some tools that I'll mention that we use in this proposal. In the first year, we offer what we've called a salary adjustment incentive. This provides \$2,000 for every teacher in their first four years of service. Now this is a one-year program. The money would be provided to the schools, not to individual teachers. The schools will be held accountable to make sure