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LB 305

SENATOR MAXWELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members of the body, Senator Tyson said he's going to need to vote with one hand holding his nose. The way my proposal is characterized in some circles, I don't know if there's a tie in there or not. Senator Wehrbein mentioned a version of budget exception that would cut it...that would reduce the exception amount in half. There's another example of an idea that I think sounds very good. I hope I can keep my amendment alive so that we can get to ideas like his and Senator Jensen's and some other worthy proposals that I think would strengthen the amendment. If the amendment should fail, let's fast-forward to the end of the session, we will have accomplished nothing, I believe, on LB 305 on teacher pay. The question you need to ask yourself right now is will you regret not taking the chance now to do something meaningful when you had that chance? Friends, that's been my main motivation all through this process. Back in the committee meetings I gave a written memo to my committee colleagues as we got into the home stretch of dealing with LB 305. I tried to streamline it in committee. I've spent five or six weeks trying to garner support for a compromise, all because I don't want to be standing around on June 1st empty-handed, having accomplished nothing for teachers. The question is asked, is there anything in here for teachers? There is a hiring bonus for new teachers who teach in shortage areas. There is a veteran bonus, fairly ample one, \$2,500 a year for veteran teachers. You see, I'm not interested in political posturing; in taking a position that has no chance of succeeding. I want to try to do something that succeeds. I don't want teachers to get shut out. I'd love to do more, but this is what is possible given the political reality we face. (inaudible) I'll just suggest one more time, in your imagination, fast-forward to the end of the session and you're standing there empty-handed. At that moment, are you going to regret not taking the chance that we have right now to do something meaningful that has a chance to succeed? That's the question you're facing right now. That's what we're voting on right now. Obviously, I hope you'll join me in voting "yes" on my amendment. With that, Mr. Speaker, I'll ask for a call of the house, a record vote, and a roll call vote in regular order. Thank you.