

SENATOR REUTZEL: Well I'm not sure.

SENATOR HEFNER: The 7% increase.

SENATOR REUTZEL: I would have to check with the bill to make sure Senator Hefner but the total amount of money would not change. Would not be any more.

SENATOR HEFNER: Yes, okay. In other words the supervisors wouldn't be able to give those extra raises then for incentives. I would oppose the Reutzel amendment on this basis.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Cullan.

SENATOR CULLAN: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, two years ago or was it last year, I can't recall, I stood up and supported the Appropriations Committee as they went for this, a very similar plan, with the merit increases. Over the summer I visited some state agencies and I won't mention the names of the agencies to take a look at how those merit raises were being used. It certainly changed my mind with respect to the salary positions or the philosophy for appropriating personnel money in the State of Nebraska. I think that Senator Reutzel was very correct when he pointed out a good deal of politics, internal politics is played in individual state agencies with merit raises. Often times those who go along, so to speak, receive the raises whether they do good work or whether they don't. Those that throw a rock in the pond or create a ripple or two even if they are very good employees don't receive the kind of raises that they deserve. I think very strongly Senator Reutzel's amendment should be adopted and that we should take that element of politics out of peoples pay. Now, I think that if there are employees that are very bad then they should be fired or disciplined in some other fashion. But when we are talking about a 7% raise in a time of inflation of 10 or more then perhaps we should abandon the merit idea and if we want merit pay it should be above that base 7%. So I would support Senator Reutzel and hope that we would reject, or support Senator Reutzel's motion and reject the amendment or reject the philosophy as given to us by the Appropriations Committee.

SPEAKER MARVEL: We are discussing the amendment to LB 586. I don't want to discourage debate but I will call your attention to the agenda which allows two hours at the moment for all of these bills. Senator Cope, do you wish to speak on the Reutzel amendment?

SENATOR COPE: I call for the question.