

to the Banking Committee for public hearing. The bill was advanced to General File. There are no amendments pending, Mr. President.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Burrows.

SENATOR BURROWS: Mr. Speaker, I move the advancement of LB 244. LB 244 allows the administration to provide dental benefits in a state plan or any portion thereof to fund a program providing state employees with dental benefits or any portion thereof. It is a permissive piece of legislation. There is no fiscal impact but presently we do not have that provision and that option for the administration if it so decides to go into a dental benefit plan with state employees. I think the possibilities of this being advantageous to the state are very good. It is a way of providing the employees additional benefits without paying federal income tax where benefits become a higher part of the pay plan and I hope the Legislature advances this bill. Thank you.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Koch.

SENATOR KOCH: Mr. Speaker and members of the body, I would like to call your attention to the fact that this does exclude certain individuals such as state colleges, technical colleges and the university system and those people who work at least half time or more. We are talking primarily about those people who are employed here in this building and other state office buildings. In view of the fact that we have seen fit over the past several years to minimize their increases in terms of salary and other fringe benefits, I believe it is only appropriate that we provide to these people additional health benefits to those individuals plus their families. I don't think it is unrealistic at all. We don't say we are going to provide total dental benefits but that can be a part of the package, either half or whatever the decision might be what we will recommend to this program. So I am suggesting that this body if we really believe in state employees and those who help us in our daily endeavors, I think they are deserving of some consideration other than just salaries at all times and this is not unique just to these people but if you look at the State of Nebraska many other individual citizens have this privilege in the private sector. Why not try to treat these people with some degree of equity in terms of programs that are being offered. I ask for you to support LB 244.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Higrins.