

SENATOR HIGGINS: Would Senator Burrows yield to a question, please?

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Burrows, do you yield?

SENATOR BURROWS: Certainly.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Senator Burrows, is the state employees' insurance funded entirely by the state or do the employees make any contribution?

SENATOR BURROWS: On this one?

SENATOR HIGGINS: Yes, on the dental bill, would the employees have to pay part or would the state pay all of it?

SENATOR BURROWS: This bill would provide the option for the state to provide what it decided. It could be a portion or the entirety of the plan. The bill is open in this. It could be a portion, any portion or the entirety provided by the state if the state so chooses to provide a plan.

SENATOR HIGGINS: At the present time, do you know, Senator, if the hospitalization plan that state employees have is total-ly state funded or not?

SENATOR BURROWS: It is a split, the present health insurance but the state does not for these employees provide any dental insurance at the present time. The health insurance plan is a split as a precedent by the employee and the state both contributing into the health insurance plan.

SENATOR HIGGINS: One more question, if the state should so decide to allow them dental insurance, would it be mandatory? In other words, would those employees who do not want it have the option of not purchasing it? In other words, what I am thinking of, is some of the state employees' salaries are so low that if they had to buy the dental health insurance, it would be another deduction from their salary and they just might not be able to afford it, so do you think it would be mandatory that they all buy it or would those who didn't want it be allowed not to buy it?

SENATOR BURROWS: Well the way I understand it and if some-one knows differently they could correct me. Presently the state provides the entirety on the single employee but this bill provides an option and would not mandate what the ad-ministration or the state decided to provide for a plan and I would hope that they would not mandate participation by employees that did not want the plan.