

the different parts. We usually just hear one side of the issue. I'm afraid if we put conference in the language of this bill that much like Senator Vard Johnson was implying, that we'll think in terms of a teacher conference where a child meets with his teacher or a teacher meets with the parents, not to explore problems but just to discuss the issue, to discuss something that has already happened. And I think that is what conference is implying and if we put it into the bill, that is exactly what it is going to say to the administrators and teachers of the state and school boards, that teachers after a decision has been made will have a right to confer to discuss about the problem, discuss the problem but not to examine it in full details. I'd like to give you an example and as you know I feel quite strongly about this because I am a teacher by trade, but I will never forget my first year of teaching in South Dakota. In about the third month of that teaching I heard a rumor that the school board met upon a question that related to myself and another first year teacher that was my roommate in a boarding house. The question that was brought before the school board was a rumor, a piece of gossip that the two of us had been in the outermost part of the district in another town, had been seen drinking with one of the high school students. The charges were totally unfounded. That board, thank God, was responsible, listened to the evidence, had their own informal hearing and decided that that's what it was, pure gossip and nothing more was said until it was rumored around the town. I was so furious that I went to the superintendent when I heard about that and said, listen, I'm going to withdraw my contract. You know, I didn't serve four years in a college to have this kind of an experience and I was very embittered by it. But he was a good superintendent and quieted me down. But I submit to this Legislature that had not that school board acted responsibly and that superintendent, I probably wouldn't have had sixteen years of teaching behind me. I would have most certainly left the field and my credentials would have been scarred, and I think that is the problem because if we could have had a hearing, it would have been right out in the open and we could have examined the evidence. But if that board had wanted to, it could have withdrawn and terminated my contract at that instance. Now as it was I had a conference with my superintendent and after I heard the rumor...

SPEAKER MARVEL: You have one minute.

SENATOR WIITALA: ...of what had taken place with the board and that's what he did. He just referred the matter to me and said that the board had acted responsibly. Members, I hope that you understand the difference in this terminology and what it implies. It just gives employees a fair hearing