

April 1, 1982

LB 761

SENATOR NICHOL: Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, I would like to oppose this amendment. I believe we have been sufficiently hard on the public employees already this year. I was trying to remember a story I heard a couple days ago about a doctor and an architect and a lawyer. They all three had a dog and they were sitting at the club drinking talking about their dogs. They started to get excited about who had the better dog, who had the best dog. And so finally they called out the dogs and the doctor started and he said, Hippocrates, that was the name of his little Beagle. He said, Hippocrates, do your stuff. And the Beagle started running to the garbage and he dug out a bunch of bones and he brought them back, and in a matter of a few minutes he had constructed a perfect human skeleton. And the doctor looked at the architect very self-satisfied. And the architect called his dog, a sheep dog, and he said, Slide Rule, do your stuff. And Slide Rule ran out to the garbage real quick and got a few more bones and he took the bones that were in the shape of the human skeleton and he rebuilt them real quick and pretty soon in a matter of a couple minutes there was a perfect Taj Mahal in replica in bones. And the architect looked kind of self-satisfied and looked at the lawyer. And the lawyer called his dog. He said, Shark, do your stuff. And Shark ran, got all the bones and he ate them all up real quick and then he ate the Beagle and then he ate the sheep dog. You know, I guess lawyers have a bit of a bad reputation because they don't appear to be very constructive sometimes. Shark wasn't very constructive and it seems to me that Shark is loose again today and that this approach of slashing public employees' salaries when they have already been slashed badly is not very constructive. If the state government is in such bad shape that we need to do things like this, then in fact what we need to do is cut programs. We do not need to ruin the public service and to cause degeneration in the quality of the public servant by not giving them salary increases that are commensurate with salary increases in the private sector. And I submit to you and challenge you to prove that the increases overall in the private sector are zero this year. That is just not true. I think 3.75 percent is very reasonable. If you cut the quality of the public servant, the next thing that happens is you cut the quality of public service, the service that the public gets. The next thing that happens is that the public gets upset with government. The next thing that happens is that the public demands that the public servants' salaries be decreased. The next thing that happens is that the Legislature reacts again and we get in a vicious circle. We've got to get out of that circle.