

to, if they're not vested yet in one system, they could lose those benefits that they have. If they are vested, the manner in which their benefits are finally concluded is based on their average salary for their last five years. Beings they are going to continue to work, and continuing to grow and advance into the school...the state system, that can negatively affect upon their benefits. The purpose of it is to make it not a penalty for an individual to transfer from one system...from the School Retirement System into the State Retirement System, so they aren't penalized when they leave working for the public schools and go to work for the department. What this amendment would do would be to allow the individuals to choose whichever retirement system they wish to be covered by, either the School Employees Retirement System or the State Retirement System. A fairly simple amendment. I'd ask that you move to return the bill to Select File for purposes of adopting this amendment.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Haberman, please, followed by Senator Abboud.

SENATOR HABERMAN: Mr. President, members of the body, if this item would have been presented to the committee before the bill was advanced to the floor, we would have attached it as a committee amendment. And I wholeheartedly support returning the bill, attaching the amendment. Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Abboud, then Senator Wesely. Senator Wesely, please.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Mr. President, members. I apologize to Senator Withem. I followed most of your conversation. Would the...if he'd yield to some questions just about the...The State Employee Retirement System and the School Retirement System are completely different. One is a defined benefit, one is a defined contribution plan, so they are quite different. But I can see where trying to rectify differences is important. And I'm just wondering, Senator Withem, right now if you're moving out of a school into the Education Department are they...are you wanting to allow them to continue to be under the school retirement plan? Is that the intent of this amendment?

SENATOR WITHEM: Allow them the choice of remaining under the School Retirement System or going into the State Employees Retirement System, which ever they prefer.