

committee amendments.

SENATOR LAMB: The committee amendments have been adopted. Senator Barrett, on the bill.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. President, and members, LB 575 is a bill which I have been working with since last summer with the State Department of Education, as well as the Professional Practices Commission. The issue was brought to my attention, oh, last year, by a constituent and investigating further with the department and the PPC I found out that they were also interested in trying to correct some procedural problems in our current teacher disciplinary program. So we continued to work with those two different agencies and I have introduced the bill at their request. Briefly, LB 575 does two or three things. First of all, it gives the Department of Education the authority to investigate and prosecute complaints against professionals to whom certificates have been issued, and this is probably the most important part of the bill. Secondly, it provides a prestate board hearing for nonpublic school certificate holders and then, finally, it simply explains the difference between the terms "revoke" and "suspend". That is essentially the primary sections of the bill. Currently, when there is a complaint made against a public school teacher or an administrator in this state, that complaint goes to the Commissioner of Education and then the Professional Practices Commission investigates that complaint and then the PPC either dismisses or has a hearing and then the complainant, at that point, prosecutes, that is the parent or the complaining party has to prosecute. They will go out and hire the attorney and go through the expense and the time of that hearing and then the recommendation is made to the State Board of Education or whatever, suspension, dismissal or whatever. Now, under 575, it starts the same way. The complaint is made. The complaint goes to the Commissioner of Education, then to the Department of Education and that department then investigates the complaint and the Department of Education can either dismiss the complaint at that point or they can hold a hearing. The PPC will hold the hearing but the Department of Education prosecutes, that's the only change, and then recommends...the State Board of Education can then revoke or suspend or make a public reprimand or whatever. That's essentially the bill. Right now, the private citizen has to present the state's evidence. The private citizen has to hire the attorney, as I said, and that's often too time consuming and often too expensive and sometimes those complaints go unattended