

what is proper professional conduct. You know, we're not talking about a dentist who fills a tooth and the filling comes out or improperly fits a set of dentures or things along those lines that may be noncompetent, that the dentist isn't as good at practicing his profession as we would like, we're talking about dentists that are, you know, illegally billing the Medicare system or dentists that are taking improper liberties with their female patients and those types of things. Wanted to clarify that that's what we talk about here with Professional Practices Commission in the area of teaching. We're talking about unprofessional types of activities. We're not talking about general incompetence. If you have a teacher who is teaching students and is not getting the job done of helping the young people learn the subject matter, that is the responsibility of the local Board of Education to deal with that, going through the teacher evaluation process, the just cause process if they have had the number of years to come under the Continuing Contract Act, and to discharge those teachers, that ought to be a local responsibility and they ought to be doing that. If they are paying people a salary to teach young people and those young people are not learning and it's the fault of the teacher, those local boards of education ought to be discharging those teachers. That ought to be a local decision. General incompetence then ought to be at the local level. What we're talking about with the PPC is unprofessional actions, actions that are violating the trust that boards of education and parents put in teachers by performing actions that are of an unprofessional nature. And I think with the committee amendments in this bill we're separating those two types of distinctions. Keep in mind, we're not talking about a person...if a person ought to be fired from a job, that ought to be the local Board of Education's responsibility. If a person is in the teaching field and they should not be teaching young people anywhere in our state because of gross improprieties, that's the type of action the Professional Practices Commission ought to be involved in. That's the type of thing that we're talking about doing here. What Senator Barrett is attempting to do is make it easier...easier to prosecute those types of offenses when they do come to light. I think what...with the committee amendments, particularly what Senator Barrett has here is a good bill and I would urge the Legislature to support it.

SENATOR LAMB: The Chair recognizes Senator Bernard-Stevens.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Mr. President. Senator