

Barrett, would you answer a couple...at least a question or two for me?

SENATOR LAMB: Senator Barrett.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Certainly.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Actually, I ask these questions more to get it on the record than anything. Some members of the body have come up and asked does this set...does this bill set the stage for a frivolous charge or, you know, I don't like what the counselor did or the counselor made a decision on a course of study that I didn't want to do and I'm upset and I'm mad or I didn't get this teacher or the teacher said this, and so on, and so I'm going to make a harass...harass the person and go through this procedure. Do you see this as setting any stage at all for opening the door to harassments on frivolous charges? And I know the answer to that but I would like to have you get that so it's on the record if we could.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you, Senator Bernard-Stevens, and I'm glad to respond. This isn't going to increase the number of frivolous complaints at all. A frivolous complaint can be made now, for that matter. What the bill does is change the authority to investigate from the PPC to the Department of Education. The frivolous complaints will be thrown out on the basis of the section in the bill, I believe, which refers to legally sufficient evidence constituting grounds for action of some kind. The PPC continues as the independent body of peers to hear the evidence presented by both sides and then they decide on the recommendations to the Board of Education. So, absolutely not. No, I have no fear at all. In fact, this, as far as I'm concerned, strengthens it. The PPC, as you know, Senator Bernard-Stevens, is made up of administrators and members of the teaching profession.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Senator Barrett. I think that does help clarify for those members of the body who may have had some questions on that. It is a good bill, 575, in it's current amended form with the committee amendments. It is something that strengthens the procedure that we have, particularly in areas that we do have a criminal problem. It does separate an investigator for the serious problems so there is no conflict of interest and I think the body would be well...would well serve the people of Nebraska by passing at