

better than what we started out with and, personally, I can support the Conway amendment. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Bernard-Stevens, Senator Moore next.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Mr. President. I shouldn't take very long and I'll give the remainder of my time to Senator Withem if he so desires. A couple of, I think, general comments. At this point, I certainly am supportive of the Conway amendment. I think it does a multitude of things that makes it more palatable for the body to continue. I would like to clarify a couple things. Number one, I'd like the body to keep in mind what we've done in regard to teachers' salaries and property tax. When we began LB 89 we had \$100 million for teachers' salaries, in essence, and \$50 million in property tax. Under 89 now, if we agree with the Conway amendment and we look at what the Legislature has done in property tax, we're going to have under LB 84 combined with 611 still \$94 million in property tax relief, so we haven't changed much on property tax but we're down to \$20 million for teachers. So I think there has been a substantial give on one side if we're concerned about property taxes. The Legislature is facing that issue, but in regards to teachers' salaries we've gone from 100 million down to \$20 million. So I think we need to keep that perspective well at hand when we get concerned about the \$20 million in property tax relief. The other point I'd like to make is...I think the body is still a little bit unclear, is that school boards, by this bill, local control is clearly maintained. They will negotiate with their assoc...the local associations as they always do as to what level of salary the teachers should be paid within that district and they will weigh that against, obviously, the mill levy and the property valuations and all those political and financial discussions and decisions will be made at the local level. Whatever level they decide to set it at, and certainly LB 89 as it will be drafted, hopefully, will be an incentive to increase some of those salaries. But wherever they end up falling, they will be able to qualify in most cases for the pool of funds and then a pool of funds of the 20 million, no more than 20 million, will be divided as to how they qualify for that pool of funds and the money will be extra. The money will be a bonus set. So those that are concerned that if two years from now there is no money, or the Legislature decides not to appropriate any further funds, will that affect teachers' salaries that have been already negotiated, how do you