

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Mr. President. Just very, very briefly, I certainly understand Senator Smith's concern. She has been consistent on that from previous discussions and this morning, and even certainly on the floor now, and I appreciate that very much. I would, however, have to agree with Senator Withem and other senators that either may or may not speak on the amendment, and that is the Legislature has visited this issue. We have made decisions on this and I think the body was ready to move on 89. We were ready to go and, once again, now we are revisiting this area. I always get a little concerned when we try to solve all the problems that are out there in one particular bill, and a bill of this nature with the funding and financing the schools the way we have in this state, which is a bad system, and we are going to go back in and look at that area of refinancing of education. LB 611 is out there which will get rid of equalization and foundation because there has got to be a better way to do so. But I get a little concerned when we try to revisit all these areas again and again and again, and I sense the body is ready to move on 89 in its present form, and I would hope that we would do so relatively quickly. I do, also, want to bring to the attention that the figure we have set of the \$16,000 now in the Conway amendment, within the last 24 hours, that has reduced by almost \$2,000. You had one where you had it at 18, and we said, okay, we will set it to 17, but we don't want to do that, that was one of the major points that we wanted to stress, that we wanted to bring levels of teachers up to a particular level within the State of Nebraska. Then the Conway amendment said we are going to do away with Phase I but we are also going to give more incentive because there may not be enough there to require the smaller districts to get up there that are underpaying their teachers tremendously, we will lower it to 16, and now we are having a further lowering. I think the body has already said, listen, we like the Conway amendment, the 16,000 is good. We had a thorough debate on it and I would hope that we would simply move on. We have got other issues that are pending to the Legislature, not that I want to curtail discussion at all but I think the body does know what it is doing and we have made our decisions on it. I would hope that we would dispose of the Smith amendment and, hopefully, there would be no further amendments, we'd simply advance the bill at this point. Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Wesely, please. Senator Nelson.