

Hefner and Senator Lamb, if you both would like to have a few minutes of my time since you didn't get to speak on the issue. I would just like to open by saying that I am sorry if those of us who were "at the table" this morning think that that binds us and the entire body to anything that comes up for final deliberation on this floor. I always thought that this legislative body was a deliberative body, that the purpose for debate on the floor was to help me, at least, make up my mind how I stood on issues and where things went on the floor, make a decision on how I finally will vote, too. And as I said, I am sorry there is a difference of opinion. There is also a difference in the way we perceive what we are doing, and if they are angry about that, I am sorry, as I said, but I don't personally like being attacked by people off the...I guess I would rather have it be in private than on the microphones, but, anyway, I will just go on and make my closing and say that this amendment supports the concept of progressively raising the minimum required to get distribution over a three-year period. If we are concerned that the teachers currently below \$16,000 are not going to be included in this, then this amendment will allow those lowest paid teachers to become a part of it. It would say to a district, we will give you a tenth of full-time employee for that \$14,000 teacher this next year but, remember, in order for them to continue to receive the money the next year, or the next year after that, they have to make the effort of increasing that salary, which becomes higher over time, so that at the end of the three-year period they are where these folks want them to be anyway. And that was, I thought, the purpose originally, that we were trying to bring up the salary of the teachers in the State of Nebraska, and give them a share, all of them a share of this incentive package, of this teacher enhancement salary package. I would remind you that it increases or distributes more dollars to the smaller schools sometimes who can't afford because of the valuation to provide the salary at the level that those more affluent school districts can and do, particularly in the urban areas. It encourages the rural school district to raise the salaries, provides incentives for teachers to further their education, and, as I said, most importantly of all, the lowest paid teachers who receive the smallest salary now get to be included and that is my purpose for the amendment. I ask your support of the amendment. I think it is a very fair, fair amendment to LB 89, and I would give the rest of my time to Senator Hefner. Thank you.