

PRESIDENT: Senator Withem, please.

SENATOR WITHEM: Yes, Mr. President and members, I will try to be as quick as I can but I did want three points to make. Number one, there has been a lot of discussion today about the meeting we had this morning. Maybe I don't do these things as well as other people do, but I have often thought one of the roles of a chairman of a committee when one of the bills that came from that committee is clogging up things on the floor that we ought to take some time to try to get people together to work things out a little better, at least work out the procedure. That is all I tried to do. I had a sense of what happened at that meeting. Obviously, it was different from some others. I guess, I was telling Senator Barrett here, if we hadn't had that meeting this morning, we would have probably spent all day on this bill and look at how quickly we are processing it as a result of that meeting. So, number two, I am concerned about the urban-rural comments, and I am concerned in this regard, that the bill, as introduced...Senator McFarland, you are 100 percent right in your statements about the bill as it was introduced. We had two parts to the bill and they were delicately balanced. Phase I was the rural-oriented portion of the bill. Phase II was the urban-oriented portion of the bill. We had amendments yesterday brought to us, individual amendments, written and filed by four different senators, all four of whom tend to be spokesmen for the rural parts of the state, all four of those were taking out Phase I. They are the ones that brought the issue of taking Phase I out of the bill. We agreed with them that we would take Phase I out of the bill because they are the ones that told us we shouldn't be rewarding these districts that don't pay their teachers particularly well. That is how it got taken out of the bill. It was brought to us by those senators who tend to represent the rural areas of the district. Now we are hearing on the floor today that now it has become an urbanized bill. It became an urbanized bill because the rural senators brought us the idea. Again, I don't know how to deal with that because those ideas were brought to us by those senators that represent...

PRESIDENT: You have used three minutes of his time.

SENATOR WITHEM: I am sorry. I apologize for that then, in that case. Thank you very much. Let me give the rest of it to Senator Lynch.