

we discussed before, this is an amendment to follow Senator Nelson's. When we debated LB 953 on General, I had made the comment that I would be coming with an amendment to change the retirement age. After many discussions, we have decided to take that language out altogether. So this amendment would remove all new language which deals with early retirement after 25 years of service. It also removes the increase in the contribution rate for the state and patrol officers. Therefore, the amendment would have no fiscal impact whatsoever, so we do not need an A bill whatsoever. Also, the current retirement ages will continue as they are right now. The three things that would stay in the bill, the retirement benefit would go from 2.5 up to 3 percent per year. Also, there would be an increase in the disability benefits. And, also, the current widow's benefits are right now 50 percent of the pension. With the amendment, they would go to 75 percent. No, they are currently 75 and they will go to 100 percent, sorry. So there is currently a little over \$8 million in this fund so we do not need any A bill whatsoever with this bill with my amendment. But this is an amendment, I think, that it takes the early retirement age out and still leaves the benefits increased just a little bit for the patrolmen. I think it is a very good compromise that was worked out with the patrolmen. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Discussion? Senator Wesely, followed by Senator Nelson.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, members, I would rise in support of the Schellpeper amendment, thank Senator Schellpeper and thank Senator Haberman, and thank the Patrol for agreeing to this change. I would have had to oppose the legislation without this amendment. I didn't really want to. I recognize the good work of the State Patrol and I recognize the very hazardous work that they do and their desire to have an improved retirement plan. They already have, really, in retrospect, one of the better retirement plans. They may not feel that way, but in comparison to other retirement plans, the Patrol is, if not the best, certainly one of the best, particularly in the area of early retirement. If you look at the chart I passed out a few minutes ago, you will see the normal retirement age is usually 65. There are some exceptions. Obviously, the school employees have gotten an early retirement benefit of late, and the State Patrol right now is comparable to the Lincoln civil employees and Lincoln fire and police, otherwise, they...and the first class city fire. To go to the