

of the body. Somewhat of a difficult amendment, this is a new version that has been drafted in light of some of the work that I hear is taking place in the Appropriations Committee and in light of Senator Lynch's amendment that he has filed on the appropriations bill to this bill, but let me talk just in general terms. This is the third different version of this amendment that I have had, and explain my rationale for doing it, hopefully, if nothing else, put a few things into the record for further guidance. LB 89 was passed by this Legislature with, I felt as one of the supporters of the bill, I guess I wasn't a sponsor but I was certainly one of the supporters of it, one of the more frequent speakers on the bill on the floor, I thought the bill had two main objectives. One of those objective was in an aggregate to increase the ranking of Nebraska teachers vis-a-vis other states in the amount of compensation that they received. The State of Nebraska, at that time in a comparison with other states, and also in comparison with neighboring states, had a real dismal record in payment of teachers. One main objective of this bill was to increase the aggregate salary for the teachers in our state. A second main objective, in my mind, and I think we established at least our intent inside the body. I know you have heard a lot of letters and phone calls explaining to you what our intent was in passing this bill two years ago from people outside the body. The legislative intent is established inside this body and I believe it was our intent to provide something beyond just a distribution of money to a particular group of public employees in the state. It was our desire to create a program that would actually enhance education quality, that this money would be used to leverage improvements in our public school system. We didn't put many strings on it, admittedly, but the one thing that we did do is we did say that local school boards and school bargaining associations, teacher bargaining associations, would negotiate the distribution of this money, and it was our desire through establishing legislative intent here that those local bargaining situations would take into account how this money could best be distributed, not just to increase teachers salaries, but also to improve education quality. We put a sunset on this bill. I did not support the sunset but the Legislature put a sunset on the bill. Education Committee, last fall, conducted some studies, two public hearings, and gathered some data on how this money had been distributed, and analyzed this question of how much educational improvement did we buy with this bill? It was my conclusion, as the Chair of that committee, frankly didn't buy a lot in the area of education