

that money that could be used possibly for brick and mortar, or administrative costs, and we are going to give that money directly to the teachers. But I think that that money, if we are going to take the step of passing LB 91, and putting in an additional 20 or 15 million dollars, whatever, we need to reexamine what the purpose of the bill is and really reexamine what the purpose of the bill should be. I think Senator Withem has taken a good step. My opinion would be let's put the entire money in performance-based payment. Quite frankly, we have to ask two questions that are important. First, is there a shortage of teachers? And, secondly, is there a shortage...

SPEAKER BAACK: Time.

SENATOR ABOUD: ...of good teachers in the state? We don't know if there is a shortage of good teachers in the state because we have no way to make that comparison, but I think Senator Withem's bill will be a step in the right direction, or his amendment. Thank you.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Abboud. Senator Landis, did you wish to discuss the Withem amendment?

SENATOR LANDIS: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I will be voting for the Withem amendment, but I guess I am rising for the purpose of alerting the proponents of LB 91 that I will be interested in the debate. I am a persuadable vote here, but let me tell you that when I voted initially for the teachers' salary package, I thought I was doing this. When the bill came up for floor consideration, I took it to be the public policy rationale was that this was a one-time injection of state funds to give an incentive to local political subdivisions, schools, to pay their teachers adequate salaries, to help in the transition from where the salaries were, at a lamentably low level, to a better and more competitive level. I did not understand at that time that it was a permanent program, nor was it sold on the floor, as I recall, as a permanent program. And if we are going to change our thinking here, I need to have a rationale as to why that is the case. I shared at the time the reluctance of other members of the Legislature to make teachers permanent employees of the state, and what I need to understand in LB 91 is the rationale by which we take this step at this time in this limited fashion. I will tell you this, that were the Withem amendment to apply to dollar one in LB 91, I could see immediately the public policy virtue of this \$15 million. This \$15 million, then, would be