

would reinforce one of my recent criticisms of the bill, two years ago. I really believe that what we did two years ago was really take a step away from local control when it comes to hiring of teachers and setting their salaries. I think with Senator Conway's amendment you take that one step further, even though I agree with what he's saying. The only big problem I have with the bill at the time was that I always wanted the first amount of money to go towards...directed towards a beginning teacher, because I feel a beginning teacher, if you can't get them in the profession, you've forever lost them. Obviously that's the first priority for me, to get money toward the beginning teacher, raise the base salary. And so when people are entering college and/or exiting college, they look at that salary level and they'll go into the profession. The problem is now that if you're interested in numbers and you look at it, I mean you could be an accountant and start at a salary of 25, 30 thousand dollars, and eventually you'll be making a lot more than that, or you could be a teacher and start out in the teens somewhere, and never really make a...you know, at the most maybe you'll make 30 if you stay in it 20 years. And there's a problem with that. But the thing is you've got to get them into the profession first, and the beginning teachers are the ones that should have the first priority for this money, in my opinion. I think it's unfortunate that NSEA has really, in many ways, you know not done this, not directed the money toward the beginning teacher. In essence they probably did what Senator Withem talked about, they took the opinion that unless you raise the salary of people, 10 to 15 years in the profession, they're going to leave, and that is kind of what, you know, the money has kind of went more towards that than the beginning teacher. I think that's unfortunate. But on the other hand I firmly believe that this money...what I don't want to do is...is I want to keep the teacher the negotiation process alive and well at the local level. And when we passed LB 89, I think we took a step away from that. But I think if you adopt the Conway amendment you take even another step toward saying the state is truly going to tell local governments what to pay teachers and how to pay them, and that's what I don't want to do. And so, though I agree with what Senator Conway is saying, and certainly I agree with his frustrations, I disagree with his method of solving the problem and would ask the body to oppose the amendment.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Moore. Anyone else wishing to discuss the Conway amendment? Seeing no one, Senator Conway,