

school system through thick and thin, and some of those things you reward in terms of time. But how much is that worth, \$15,000, maybe twice a teachers salary? We have a lot of school systems where the base salary is less than half of what the top salary is. Now, what are we paying for in terms of that experience, there ought to be some dollars set aside for it. But this is where I think the dollar specific amount makes sense in this bonus case. If we don't change LB 91, the way that it reads right now, we have absolutely done nothing more than taken \$15 million, handed it over to the teachers organizations, and said, here, do with this however you please, and we don't even have any input as to whether or not there's any incentives to do any of these lofty goals that we once said LB 89 was all about. And LB 89, in its original form, was brought to us by the teachers union, who had about four... I think they had a four phase plan, if you go back to the original 89, they talked about having merit pay, as Senator Withem is talking about now, and now the organization is... I'm getting letters saying don't support the Withem amendment because that merit pay is just a divisive means to create problems at the local level. That was their idea four years ago. We're the ones that saved them from that drudgery in that bill, by stripping that out of the bill two years ago I should say. That was their idea. Now when you try to put it back in, well it's a terrible idea again. But, again, my concern in this case is again that lower level teacher who was there over the course of this year, by virtue of being there that school is going to get into the state wide pool, and if we don't have any strings attached in terms of their professional accomplishments, their experiences, whether they're a good teacher or a bad teacher, none of those things that we have any control of, what I am saying is then let's just simply pay everybody the same flat dollar amount, and it comes out to be, like I say, \$750. Everybody in the system whose presence got that school X amount of money for that pool, then give them all that same amount in cash, because we're not rewarding good teachers, bad teachers, long-term teachers, short-term teachers, we've got nothing in the bill that does any of that. So how can we then turn around and justify a difference in that salary schedule, or in the distribution of this bonus as they negotiate it. And there isn't anybody in this room that knows that the salary negotiating team in any organization is going to be the old heads, and they seem...

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.