

directed to what we're all saying is the need and that's to get entry salaries up. But what we can say is the average is up. Our average is looking good. We talk about being...our average teacher salary in the state as being 39th in the state. What I have not had anyone tell me is what are we ranked...what are the top 10 percent, or what are the top 20 percent? How do we rank to other states in that regard? We're only looking at that average and that average, I believe, in this state has now gotten to the point where it is an average made up of the fact that no one is there. We have people at the very low end. We have some people up at the very high end and then we continually focus on the average and there is very few of the people we're talking about at that particular stage. So my concern, my absence of voting on the advancement of 91 is addressing that concern, has nothing to do with the fact that we have teachers in need and I certainly respect that. But I think, as a body who makes the policy of the state and is trying to do something about it, we also need to be a part of making sure that it's directed in a way that it's going to accomplish the task besides simply putting \$15 million in and showing that our average is moving forward. I think we need to direct it that it's more than the average but we are going to try to entice and bring our brightest and best in our young people into this profession. And, again, like you say, 91, I don't even know why there is any use for it at all because all we really have is the A bill for 15 million and it's directed out and then distributed without any control whatsoever. So, like I say, I'm sorry my comments are not directed...

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR CONWAY: ...towards Senator Lynch's amendment but I thought it might be the only time that I would have the opportunity so I'm sorry to take it at this moment but I did and I'm done. Thank you.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Conway. Before I go to the next speaker, I would like to introduce some guests of the Legislature. They are guests of Senator Cudaback and they are 45 students from the Amherst School at Amherst, Nebraska and their teachers and they are in the south balcony. Would you folks please rise and be welcomed by the Legislature. Thank you for being with us. The next speaker is Senator Nelson.

SENATOR NELSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, even though I