

Nebraska. So with that, I support the committee amendments.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Moore. Is there anyone else who wishes to speak on the committee amendments? Seeing none, do you have closing, Senator Withem?

SENATOR WITHEM: Yes, I would and maybe just comment, it's kind of been a lovefest here with the people that introduced the bill and the committee. I should probably, in fairness, let you know that the Director of the Professional Practices Commission does not support wholeheartedly the committee amendments. It is his view that the money that is currently being spent by the Professional Practices Commission is a justifiable expenditure, and that they need the total increase as it was originally envisioned in the bill. Our position, as a committee, after the hearing, the justification was, quite frankly, that the facts don't bear out a need to fund the Professional Practices Commission at a higher level. What the commission has done in, number one, we thought that they were somewhat inflating, and that is no means of personal aspersions against the director, but we felt they were doing what all good agencies of state government do at budget hearings, they were inflating their potential work that they were going to have in the area of disciplining teachers. We didn't see the number of cases in the pipeline that they were using to justify their expenditure. Secondly, one of the things the commission has done is they have shifted in emphasis from using their funds to run their hearings department, now that they don't have as many hearings, they are now using it for an educational function to go around and educate teachers on how the Professional Practices Commission operates. In theory, that is a worthy goal. In practice, that is never anything that has been directed by the Legislature or authorized by the Legislature. So it is our feeling that they will be able to survive, as we go through this hearing process, with 75 percent of their existing budget. I will be recommending that on the budget bill. That would be about what would cash flow nicely from this \$10 fee instead of a \$12 fee. But I did think in fairness to Mr. Wagner, I should indicate that they are not in concurrence with this amendment. You may be hearing something from them but this is our best guess. I may just also comment that I think that this was...maybe legitimizes the fact that we did have a hearing on this proposal, and were able to subject it to some more light than we may have had otherwise, had we not had the hearing on it. A \$10 fee to a teacher once every five years, or whenever they renew