

those people who have been there for awhile to stay in education because there's some rewards there and the state's going to say, for the first time, or we're going to renew what we said two years ago, that we think teaching is one of the critical key elements in the future of Nebraska and we're going to pay teachers a better wage than 41st in the nation. And I think this bill is important. Senator Hefner's amendment goes beyond what we need. We've already agreed that merit pay is something that need to look at, or performance-based pay, and that if we increase the dollars, we ought to do that. But to knock it back even further is stomping on it and digging your heel in and it's saying, well, you teachers, you're not doing much; we really...

PRESIDENT MOUL: One minute.

SENATOR HORGAN: ..don't have much respect for you and so that's, you know, we're going to stick it to you a little bit and here's a way for us to do that. I think cutting this down 25 percent is enough of that and I think we ought to pass the bill and not pass Senator Hefner's amendment. I would yield the remainder of my time to Senator Bernard-Stevens.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Forty seconds.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: I think I'll just wait until my time comes up, Madam Chairman.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Bernard-Stevens. Then Senator Robinson.

SENATOR ROBINSON: Madam President, members of the body, I'd like to ask Senator Hefner a question, please.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Senator Hefner.

SENATOR ROBINSON: My good friend Senator Hefner, do you give your people a pay raise every year?

SENATOR HEFNER: Senator Robinson, I'd be real happy to answer that. Yes, we do try to give them a pay raise every year. Sometimes it isn't too much, but we try, but we also have a very good bonus and commission program too.

SENATOR ROBINSON: Good. Knowing the good fellow you are, I knew the answer before it came. But what I'd like to know, what