

Senator Horgan. Senator Bernard-Stevens.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: I think we need to ask for call in votes for the ceasing of debate.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you.

CLERK: Senator Landis had voted aye. Senator Lindsay, excuse me, voting yes. Senator Dierks voting yes. Senator Peterson voting yes. Senator Elmer, you had voted yes, Senator. Senator Nelson...

PRESIDENT MOUL: Please record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 25 ayes, 0 nays to cease debate, Madam President.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Debate has ceased. I'll recognize Senator Bernard-Stevens for closing.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Madam President, I yield my time to Senator Rasmussen.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Senator Rasmussen.

SENATOR RASMUSSEN: Madam President and members of the body, thank you, Senator Bernard-Stevens, for giving me a couple of minutes. And if I don't use up all this time, and I probably won't, you may have the remainder of this time. In 1989 I think this body made a very wise policy choice in saying that teachers deserve higher pay in this state, that we, as a state, did not want to be 46th...42nd in the nation in terms of average teacher pay, that the teaching profession was one of the most important, if not the most important because from it comes all other professions. And so you passed a policy that said that we will raise the teacher pay. And we went from 42nd to 38th in the nation. The second year after, we reduced that amount from 20 million to 15 million, and now this year we are facing only 7 million dollars support for the teacher pay. We have already dropped back down to 40th in the nation in terms of average teacher pay. I will tell you very honestly I am looking for a way to change that direction we are going. Part of it comes from reduced amount of dollars that we are supporting for teacher pay, and part of it comes because other states are becoming more aggressive about trying to raise teacher pay in their states. And that impacts our ability to attract the best