

across the board, for all teachers in the state, we had the ability to move up the retirement benefit to the level that you'd like to under your bill, fine. I think that would be great. But once you take the step forward for the Omaha teachers, to give them that retirement benefit and increase that level, you're going to have to recognize the rest of the teachers will be in, they'll have a legitimate claim to ask you for an additional benefit. And I don't know if we've got the resources. Maybe Senator Nelson knows if we've got the resources in the bank to pay for it. I'm not so sure. And, of course, even the Omaha situation looks good now, but what if the economy drops, what if the investments they've made do not hold, what are the other problems we face down the road? And certainly we're glad to see it in good financial shape. And there is much in this bill that's beneficial. But the element that was picked out by the Retirement Committee to not be approved within your bill is a worthy step to take forward, to again preserve some equity in the system. And this is an issue that will be coming up with the Lancaster County employees, they would like very much to have a plan that would increase themselves significantly above other counties, and I've resisted that. Even...I'm not doing this just because of Omaha, but this is a philosophy I've had in retirement. You've got to have equity in retirement benefits because you can't ignore the fact that one retirement group will be asking for whatever benefit you give another retirement group. It just works its way up every time in that fashion. In Lancaster County we're trying to hold the line on that. You'll see an amendment on that at a different stage. I'd ask the body to hold the line on this as well, and to support the committee on the committee amendments and advance the rest of the bill, and recognize the committee has identified a problem and has dealt with the problem, and the committee amendments should be supported.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Wesely. Senator Pirsch.

SENATOR PIRSCH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members of the body. Senator Wesely talks about ratcheting up, each retirement system is completely different. And the Omaha School Employees Retirement System is completely different from the Nebraska School Employees Retirement System. As a matter of fact, it began in 1909, the Nebraska School Employees did not come along until 1945. And when we talk about the differences, let's remember also that the Omaha system, because it did start first, is in a separate statute by itself, and there is no other