

up later on again. And I do support increase in teachers' salaries, and sometime what I would like to see this body do is to sit down and look at how we can have a permanent funding base, how it will be included in school budgets, how we will look at the bargaining process, and how we are impacting it. With that, I will not support your amendment, Senator Conway, but I do appreciate your bringing it and for giving me the opportunity to speak to it.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Hillman. Senator Morrissey.

SENATOR MORRISSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members. I rise I guess lying squarely on the fence on this particular bill. I support loading the teachers' pay on the bottom end. I support the long-term impact that that has. But I also would like to see the performance-based system have a chance to work, and I have told my teachers in meetings that I had heard that they were squabbling, if you will, unsubstantiated I heard that, and that the people at the top were getting all the money. And I have been told that that wasn't the case, that there were natural disagreements that happen in any...as happen in any negotiations, but everyone seemed to be pretty well satisfied with the end results. I do, and I told them that I hoped they would keep in mind that the teacher pay bill is truly a long-term program, and the long-term aspect of it is loading up the bottom end, in my opinion, and raising the base to do the things we said the bill is to do, reward those that have achieved, and attract the best and the brightest to the profession. And that is the long-term goal and that is what I think is the most important. So I guess right now I will probably oppose Senator Conway's amendment. I like the idea of the money coming in at the bottom. I like the long-term aspect of that, but I think, just as in any other body, these people that negotiate for the teachers' group at the local school, are appointed or elected by a body of the teachers, as a whole, and that if they are not satisfied with their negotiations team on the local level that they can change that, and they will change that, and that is how it is supposed to work. I will not vote for this, although I am really interested in what it is trying to do. I will let the performance-based system have a chance to work, let the politics and the interaction between teachers on the local level work as they should and will, and, hopefully, we will get a fair and just system on the distribution of the money. I'd oppose Senator Conway's amendment.