

have before you. What...

SENATOR MAURSTAD: Okay, so you're looking at a situation where you feel it's important to start a cost-of-living adjustment in the program and, instead of choosing one of the three to possibly provide a one percent COLA to, you're doing it to all three of them. And the intent would more than likely be if funds were available in the future to increase that cost of living to the extent that would be prudent at that point in time.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Senator, if at some time in the future it was possible to enrich these COLAs, based on what I now know about the retirement systems, I'd certainly recommend that. I don't think within the fiscal constraints that we currently have that is possible. We're not asking you to do the impossible. I'm not choosing to pursue that course.

SENATOR MAURSTAD: No, and I appreciate that, but that number was so small in relationship to the cost of living I needed to have you clarify that and, as I indicated, you can certainly utilize the balance of my time if you'd like.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Okay. Yeah. Well, I think, Senator, your questions do raise a couple of good points and this proposal, I will reiterate again, has been designed because it is what we can afford to do within the constraints of the existing funding. Senator Maurstad also noted of course, as I have earlier, that this is "acrossed" all three plans and that we must have had some reason for wanting to do that. I do have a reason for offering this provision "acrossed" all three plans. I think we have a need, as the ultimate designers of the plan, to provide greater similarities between the plans. Now there will continue necessarily to be different provisions in the plans, and I'm talking here about the defined benefit plans, based on the nature of the type of employment that's involved. Judges, for example, necessarily have to have different provisions than members of the State Patrol, et cetera. There will be different provisions. But where we're able to conform the plans I believe that's desirable and that's part of the motivation in bringing an identical COLA "acrossed" all three plans. It...there are currently some disparities. We are going to attempt to...

SPEAKER WITHEM: One minute.