

I'll just give you that little compliment, but that is true. I have been on this committee, he's the second chair I think, and incidentally the studies that we are bringing to a close now probably within the next year or so started before Senator Wickersham was chair. We've been at this for at least four years. One little thing I want to correct that Senator Witek said earlier that the teachers did not try to add to the gasoline tax to get more money for HELP. What they did was ask for their share of the gasoline tax money that went into the Highway Trust Fund because of the way LB 1059 was written, Senator Withem and some of them will remember, and that was what they were trying to do. They didn't get it. They did try to get a tax on pop. That didn't work. But one of the things there that I think we've brought to a culmination now is taking that 7 million that was supposed to go for the HELP money, it wasn't working the way we thought it would originally, and put it into this. At least it's going to work in a way that is more beneficial to the people that wanted the money originally. The other thing, just as a general statement about public employees, one thing we must remember about public employees of all kinds, they are in public safety, they protect us, they put out fires, they teacher our children, they run the government in the state, city, counties, schools, and also the people that are in the retirement system pay into it with their money too. It isn't just a handout from the state. This system was worked out many years ago and I think that when it was first started I'm sure the people that organized and started the retirement system had no idea how it would grow. They were hopeful, but it has come into a real benefit for public employees. The other thing, when you think about that group of people, they're all mostly hard-working people, 99 percent of them hard-working people and try to do a good job for us every day. The patrol lays itself on the line out there on I-80 every day. We've had some patrolmen killed on...by criminals on the highway. Someone get out of a car and...or go to the window and a shotgun then comes up and kills him. So think about that when you think about who are the people who are involved. That's all. I always look at who are the people we are talking about here? We're talking about public employees. And the other thing, as a whole, this is a generality, but as a whole that group of people, they don't have anything else, any other way of getting retirement. Most of them don't make huge salaries. There are some who are a top echelon, but most of them don't make enormous salaries. So as...when they end up, I was glad that Senator Wickersham