

You're putting this into a retirement program, promising to put that money in there, and it has to go on and on and on once you make that commitment. So you're really making a really huge policy decision here. And I'm not sure if everybody, you know, because once I was on Retirement Committee it took me quite some time to understand a lot of these issues and I still have a long way to go on understanding those. But if you just take a minute and read through this fiscal note, it's only a couple of pages and it's, it's very clear that they're taking the money from all these different sources and they're putting it into the retirement of all the state employees, all the retirement systems that we handle, and it originally had been intended for merit pay for teachers. So, to me, that's not the right way to do things. It's kind of a back door way to do this kind of thing. You promised one thing, you never delivered, you never funded it, and now you're going to go and take that money because it's available and go slide it into a cost of living increase into all the retirement programs, and the HELP fund's going to be discontinued, but they're going to be happy, supposedly, because it's going into their...

SENATOR CROSBY: One minute.

SENATOR WITEK: ...retirement. And, you know, I still say, this is really not an honest, an honest way to do this. And I guess I'm just disappointed that people, a majority of individuals on this floor are choosing to do it this way. Thank you.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Witek. Senator Bromm.

SENATOR BROMM: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I rise in agreement with Senator Janssen and Senator Witek on this issue. And I have to admit, I haven't thought about it enough since it first came up, when it was first on the floor, the 700 LB itself. But there is no question but what this is a very unnoticeable way to permanently increase our expenditures on the state level and at the same time we're also putting a small additional burden on local school districts. And when we're at the stage we're in right now and we're trying to figure out how to cut taxes and we're trying to figure out how to reduce expenditures, we're even looking at forced mergers, at consolidation of services, we're looking at every possible conceivable way to save a few hundred thousand dollars. And I'm not saying anything that the people that would receive the