

bargaining concept by statute and there was one agency that came to me and indicated that...when they began to negotiate they looked upon this as a great opportunity to negotiate for a much higher salary than was probably otherwise going to be paid and they were going to use this bargaining process to inflate their salaries, and they asked me what I thought about it. It's back when I was on Appropriations, and I said it's fine, they could do that, but I would suspect the Legislature was not going to appropriate the money to do what they wanted to do. And their only choice, once they signed that contract, would be reduce, a reduction in their personnel. Well, it didn't get out of hand. There was reasonable and fair negotiations. There was a settlement that was appropriate...

PRESIDENT ROBAK: One minute.

SENATOR WARNER: ..and it has worked well. I know there are problems with CIR. I know that the array of comparability creates an issue, but this is not an issue that I would hope this body would attempt to address at this point, but recognizing that's going to be one of the major issues as we look ahead. But I'd strongly urge not to put this issue in at this late date.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Warner. Senator Will.

SENATOR WILL: Thank you, Madam President, members of the body. I rise to strongly urge you to reject this amendment for many of the reasons that Senator Warner outlined. The fact is, regardless of the merits of this idea, Select File, on a bill that is designed to address the property tax situation in the state of Nebraska is not a time to be rewriting the relationship between labor and management, with respect to public employees. Certainly I can understand the concerns of the political subdivisions because of the amount that they do expend on public employees, but what we would be doing by considering this or any other amendment that would achieve the purposes of this amendment would be to fundamentally alter that relationship and take away a very valuable bargaining tool and alter the balance of power between the public employees and management. What we have done in the state of Nebraska historically is we have denied public employees the right to strike. That is not an option that is out there for public employees in the state of Nebraska. It is simply illegal for public employees to strike.