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LB 849

widely spread, widely looked at, I don't know. I do think, once it starts, it's going to be a program that will have to be continued. So, if you don't believe in it, now is the time to stop it, I'll be very blunt. On the other hand, if you think our volunteers are important across this state and they need some incentive, I think this is a modest proposal to do some encouragement, and it is subject to our appropriations, in other words, it's up to \$100. And so I think there will be some control along that line. But I also acknowledge there will be political pressure in the future to...to...to fund that. I...I just felt I needed to lay out what I see probably as both sides of this, because I...it's going to be up to you as to how serious you see our emergency services across this state and their importance. Certainly, down the road, if we end up going to paid personnel, especially in our modest-sized cities, which obviously Nebraska is fairly small, that is going to be an expense eventually on the property tax. So I don't know how long our system is going to be successful, as it is volunteer, but it looks like to me, if we can extend that into the future for as long as we possibly can, this is one way to do that. So I am going to be supporting the bill, and I thank Senator Hartnett for working out many of these details so that I think that it is clear that we do have positive control of the money. It will be invested by the State Investment Officer. There should not be a problem with losing track of that money.

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: The administration will be done by the Fire Marshal's Office, and the PERB board will be doing the accounting procedures, they will simply get the lump sum money and handle it then over to the Investment Officer for the investment policies that are already established by the state. That's the way I interpret the bill at this point.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Wehrbein. (Visitors introduced.) We are discussing the Hartnett AM1740 to LB 849. Senator Smith.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Mr. President, members. I want to rise in support of this amendment. I believe that it very adequately brings in the expertise of the agencies and