

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

February 5, 2003 LB 85

SENATOR PREISTER: Exactly. Okay, and if I have time left you may comment on my next comment, and that is that although I recognize we do need to take action, I'm not disputing that for the reasons we both agreed with earlier, my concern is we are also putting some of these good state employees in an awkward position. They either say, no, I want to remain as a state employee and they remain at the current salary, or they say, I'll terminate my state employment and become an at-will employee. Therefore, I'll get a higher rate of income, but at the same time I lose all of my state employee rights. I wouldn't want to be in that position where I have to say...make that decision and say, yes, I want the higher raise, but tomorrow I could be fired as soon as I do it because I'm at will, and I have no protections. I have no collective bargaining unit that I'm associated with, and these are the people that stayed. These are the people who continued to do the examinations. These aren't the ones who were hired away. These are the loyal employees who continue to do their job, and as far as we've been told, nobody has called into question their skills or their abilities. These are the ones that have been loyal, have done the job, have kept the banks and insurance companies in as we determined its soundness, or at least pointed out where they weren't. So my concern is when we have loyal employees, it's difficult for me to put them in that kind of an awkward position and to have them forced to make this kind of a choice that isn't necessarily going to even keep them in a job in the future. So I understand what you're doing. I'm just concerned about how it's all coming down, and the direct impact on those employees. And if you'd like...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR PREISTER: ...whatever time I have left to respond. If you don't choose to, that's fine, too.

SENATOR LANDIS: I'd have to say that I acknowledge that that is the situation, and I have a sensitivity about that. I do think the employee has a choice, but the choices aren't that bad. I mean you either get to stay where you are now with protection, or if you'd like at your choice, you could have a salary increase at a cost. But at least the employee gets a choice.