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SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: Okay, point taken. Is there anything in the bargaining unit agreement, Senator Landis, that would prevent the Department of Insurance on embarking on a program of bonuses, merit raises, and them sorts of things, apart from the bargaining unit, itself, or bargaining agreement, itself?

SENATOR LANDIS: I am going to give you an answer but I am guessing, John, and my answer is, yes, there is a prohibition from a department offering compensation packages or bonuses over and above what is negotiated. You either have to agree to it, or in this case, it has to be done by law, but I don't think a department has the right, under the contract, to create special and unique rules unto itself. So I think there is a prohibition, but I got to tell you, I'm answering off the top of my head and I could be wrong.

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: Let's presume, Senator Landis, that there is no such prohibition. I don't know if there is or not either. Do you see that as a potential remedy, that the Department of Insurance has the wherewithal to offer a scheduled bonus program apart from the bargaining unit agreement, that that could be a remedy to this?

SENATOR LANDIS: I think probably in confluence with what Senator Beutler is arguing, in other words, if you negotiated that, I think it could be a solution. If you could get an agreement by both parties to that, which I think is required by their contract, if you use the contract, or by law, which is LB 85, but if you did that, that would be a form of remedy.

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: Because, Senator, I acknowledge this is a problem within the Department of Insurance accreditation problems, but I would like to try to remedy the situation within the bargaining unit, whatever way we can, and you submit your difficulties in that process, and that has evolved in LB 85. But I'm really reluctant, at this point, to not solve this problem within the confines of the current system that we're under. Thank you.

SENATOR ENGEL: Thank you, Senator Synowicki. Senator Schimek,