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FLOOR DEBATE

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receive an amount proportionate, and if this bill were to go forward, according to what the Legislature made the appropriations for to the state teachers, it would be probably about \$2.6 to \$2.9 million that would go to their system. So there is money involved if we do pass this legislation. So again, I would urge your support to defeat this amendment at this time. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Stuhr. Senator Synowiecki, followed by Senator Schimek and Bourne.

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: Thank you, Senator Cudaback and members of the Legislature. I think this is an issue of equity for teachers across our state. I honestly believe that. And as Senator Stuhr indicated, the Omaha school system has their own separate system and, in fact, that system began in 1906, some 35 years before the state retirement system...statewide retirement system for teachers came on line. So they've been around for quite a long time and have been providing retirement benefits for their teachers since 1909, again, some 36 years before the state retirement system came on line. I think it's important that we delineate here that we're not talking about contributions. Senator Stuhr referenced the percent of pay that teachers and the corresponding school boards pay into their corresponding plans. This amendment that's offered by Senator Bourne has absolutely nothing to do with contribution by members and by the corresponding school boards. This has...the amendment's scope deals only when we have to dip into General Fund appropriations to help offset some of the plans relative to retirement, both OPS and the school. And it simply...the amendment simply implements into statute what's been a 60-year tradition that when we do have to rely upon General Fund appropriations for our teachers in our state that we treat each plan, the two separate plans, equitably; that when we're forced to look at General Fund funding, that the funding for the school plan in Omaha receives a corresponding General Fund appropriation that the statewide teachers' fund has, and in fact we've been doing this for 60 years. So it is...it is, in essence, an issue of equity that teachers across the state receive the corresponding General Fund appropriations if we have to go to that level of General Fund appropriation for our