

May 23, 1983

LB 629

hands, will vote aye, those opposed vote no. Voting aye, Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Senator Landis voting aye.

SENATOR LANDIS: Fifteen seconds. The Clerk will record.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 28 ayes, 0 nays to cease debate.

SENATOR LANDIS: We cease debate. Senator Warner, on your closing for the specific amendment to LB 629.

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, to respond to two or three things. The merit system has been referred to. It covers employees in only six agencies and it is a federal program. The rest of the employees are covered under the State Personnel system which they can become a classified employee in time and gives them some job protection but they are not all under the merit system. The other thing that should be pointed out if you make no change now for the next twelve months, then what you have done is given a 5% increase in the last 24 months. That is an average of 2½% per year in any way you cut it, any way you figure it for the 12 months or the two years of 12 months each, total of 24 months. There are other reasons why one should argue. The salary survey has had some reference and there are some that are critical of salary survey. I have at times in the past been because it doesn't necessarily cover every classification that there is. The thing that is significant though is that you usually use beginning salaries. A far more significant finding in that salary survey is that by job classifications state employees were as of July 1 of 1982 12½% below the average for those same job classifications. So to argue that they are overpaid really doesn't hold water. You can also argue, it has been argued that there are other benefits, paid holidays. That is set by statute. If you think those are too much you can change it. But the point is that it seems to me to consider a 2½% salary adjustment per year for the last two years is about as modest as you can possibly talk about. So I would hope that you would adopt this amendment. It is reasonable. Depending on what happens to some of the other bills or depending on what the Governor may sign or veto, it can easily be accommodated within the rates that we are already talking about if some other bills either are not passed or vetoed. I hope you adopt the amendment.

SENATOR LANDIS: Senator Warner has closed. We will proceed with the vote on the issue. I have a point of personal privilege, Senator Higgins, is that right? The Chair recognizes you.