

May 10, 1979

LB 586

SENATOR WARNER: Do I understand we are not taking up the motion to return, right?

SPEAKER MARVEL: Yes, the motion is to return the bill to Select File for specific amendment which is to strike the word "professional" on page 21, line 22.

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I rise to oppose the amendment. We have been through this argument many times and once or twice this session. The position that the Appropriations Committee was willing to accept this session was that those individuals essentially in the lower grade classifications should be guaranteed a straight 7% and the old argument always for a discretionary fund was that particularly in the lower grade scales that abuse of discretion could occur. But it is always recognized I think by most people that when you get into management level professionals at a much higher scale, that then performance ought to be able to be taken into account by the agency head. This is not a merit. It is only discretion. Every agency can do a flat 7% if they like. The real purpose of this kind of a proposal is to permit the discretion, the judgment decision that there is one or two of the higher level people not performing well as they ought to in comparison to the rest of the group that works in that same office that they are not rewarded in the same fashion in the terms of salaries, and if you are going to pay an individual who is not performing well with the same increases as those, the vast majority of the same people in the same position in the same office who are performing well, then you have only accomplished raising everybody's productivity down to the lowest level within the office and I guess I am caught in the position of being in the management area most of my life and I have never thought it was right or correct that the only choice for low productivity was to fire a person. I prefer to try to help them along recognizing that, you know, if you are not doing well we can't reward you like the rest but we want you to progress and stay here and really get with it. I fully anticipate that you will find this used very little but I would suggest it is a very significant tool for management to increase the productivity of an operation and in the long run the satisfaction of employees. I have had state employees make the comment to me that we are essentially talking for a flat 7% for everyone but they also agreed that the most annoying thing is to be in an office where one guy that was goofing off quite a bit gets the same reward that they did who were working hard. That is the purpose for the discretionary fund. I would trust that the Legislature would reject