

retirement system which would significantly help their retirement benefits. But it doesn't apply retroactive to those periods of time spent prior to the change which was somewhat unclear under the bill we passed a couple of years ago. As a result of that being unclear we had people who, for just a very short period of reemployment, could make a large, large change in their retirement benefits. This is an important bill. It is an important issue. It is an important amendment that needs to clarify what the provisions for retirement are. I would urge the adoption of the committee amendments.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Mr. President, members, I, too, would rise in support of the committee amendment and the bill itself, LB 350. Both Senator Vickers and Senator Harris have explained, quite well, the situation. Let me just add a little bit more. LB 457 was a bill that I sponsored and we passed last year. It was a good bill. It increased benefits for teachers. I'm proud that we did it. However, we did have to have, because we don't want to have an exclusionary class, any time you improve benefits you have to have it an open class so that people that wanted to come back in and get hired back would be eligible for new and higher benefits. However, we found abuses taking place. I've had calls from around the state of teachers that have seen other teachers go back in and are now going to have unbelievable increases in retirement benefits as a result of that very short period of additional time they put in. They felt it wasn't fair. They want to get in on the same deal. So, because of that, the teachers are very upset that are outside and not getting a chance to get back in and those teachers that are participating they have probably legitimate reasons, and obviously if you could have your retirement benefits quadruple or triple as a result of coming back in for a few months, you wouldn't pass up the opportunity either. But nevertheless, that wasn't what we intended. The intent of the bill last year was to improve benefits for teachers now teaching or about to end their teaching career. That is what we were trying to do. For those that are now retired we have other legislation to deal with that. We weren't trying to upgrade all retirement benefits for both current and past teachers. So the fact that three or four teachers in the past would come back in and take on a job again after having retired, but this year