

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, as I understand, I believe Senator Remmers made reference that the contract agreement or negotiation was that an effort would be made. None of those special salary requests from any source, from any agency are included in the budget because of the tight budget situation. A number of agencies like the state colleges had similar proposals to either be on a par with a peer group, to be on par with others, if it was outside of higher education to be on a par with others with a like comparison that they felt should be adjusted, and while all of those no doubt had merit, if they would all be considered, there was several millions of dollars and I don't believe that this is a year that any of those can or should be done. There is no logic at all to select one agency over any one of the number of other agencies that have a like request and I would urge the body not to approve this amendment.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Scofield, please.

SENATOR SCOFIELD: Mr. Speaker, members, I rise reluctantly to oppose this amendment and I thank Senator Remmers for calling attention to this issue. It is a serious issue. We should do better by not only our state college employees, but our university employees and our entire state employees than we're doing. I think in the long run it's going to cost us money. I can tell you instances that I know of personally where we are losing talented people in this state particularly in higher education. If I have a priority it certainly would be to address that issue, but as Senator Warner has already ably pointed out, this simply isn't the year that we can afford to do it. But I do think as a state it is time to assess our priorities and decide in the future where we are going to place our limited state resources and I would urge you to keep this issue in mind, not only for state college employees, but for all of our state employees. So again I would thank Senator Remmers for his thought, but I have to oppose it. Thank you.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Conway, please, then Senator Lundy.

SENATOR CONWAY: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I, too, would like to rise with respect to this specific question. For quite some time, as many of you know, I have been affiliated with the state college system. I'm very, very proud of that affiliation and I think they enact quality