

occasions heard and discussed early retirement proposals for teachers. To the extent that I have alleged that this has not had a public hearing, let me say that early retirement has had a public hearing in the past in a different form. This amendment is new. It is different. It is the first time that on the floor of the Legislature we have talked about this particular form of early retirement. Early retirement has not been reported out of the Retirement Committee that I can recall but there can be no doubt that this provision has been without a public hearing record. We may not look back to what our public school systems or anyone else told us about this language because we haven't had a public hearing on it and that I think is the operative rule here. Yes, we have had hearings on the topic of early retirement, not this one that I know of. And if so, certainly in this form and times change, it deserves a public hearing. Secondly, I don't care which way you play the argument, gosh, that 64-year old teacher is the best teacher in the system and we ought to keep them or, gosh, that 62-year old teacher just shouldn't be up standing in front of the classroom. You can't resolve that issue by this mechanism. This isn't the mechanism that chooses the good teacher from the bad teacher. This isn't one that ensures that the good teacher stays and the bad teacher goes. I will tell you the system that does do that. Lincoln Public Schools has it. At the public school's discretion where they want somebody out of the classroom, they can make an offer to them that they fund. What do they do? They make the offer to the one that doesn't belong in front of the kids anymore. That is the way you distinguish between the teacher that you want to keep and the teacher that probably should be retired, but there is nothing in the Procrustean application of this language that will distinguish the good teacher from the bad teacher. So if you are going to ballyhoo this idea that it is going to improve the classroom a lot, you can't prove it. You can't say that it isn't also perhaps the good teacher that wants to leave the system for whatever reason. Doesn't mean that you maintain the best quality of teachers by passing this. And, lastly, what remains really unconvincing to me is the hidden costs. A young teacher comes in, requires the assistance of the superintendent, the principal, requires the understanding of parents, takes a lot more time putting their materials together, in fact are not as good a teacher. Who can tell me that the first year teacher is going to be the best teacher on the block? I don't believe it. Now