

reach some compromise then I think it could be processed on the floor. But I think this or any other bill, that doesn't have general agreement before you step out into this floor, is pretty well doomed to using up an awful lot of time and going nowhere. I had really hoped, sincerely, that that last amendment offered by Senator Warner did have the support. We've tried it two or three times now. If that didn't have it, I seriously doubt that any of these other amendments at 5 percent, or 50 percent, or whatever are going to get it resolved. I think everybody, myself included, had better seriously be considering the fact that if we have a bill and we haven't talked to the opponents, and about 30 people pretty solidly having support for it, those bills don't stand much chance. We've now spent as much or more time on this, by the way for ways of comparison, as we have on Initiative 300. With all due respect, we do have candidates running for the office and I do submit that some issues, whether they be Initiative 300 or a lot of the priority bills, probably ultimately are more significant than this. As I say, I support the bill. I support Senator Warner, and I do believe this is the only way to bring it to a head. So I'm suggesting it go back to committee. If they can come up with some settlement, fine. Otherwise I think we are spinning our wheels. If it isn't resolved here then it is going to be this way on a number of other bills.

PRESIDENT: The motion is to refer the bill to the committee. Senator Landis.

SENATOR LANDIS: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I do think that time is needed for discussion, in essence off the floor, out of the auctioneering process, in trying to arrive at a middle ground. I'm not sure that it has to be a reference to the committee. Let me suggest to you that what is needed is not an auction but a principle that can replace this auctioneering with a rationale for increase. Let me offer one to the body. What if we go back to 1979 and we figure out the state employee salary increases from that date to this, and make that the opening salary. Then apply a formula that says these officers will receive the same percentage increase that state employees get, no more, no less. Times are tough. It's a zero state employee's salary, zero for these people. If we wind up having a tax base that can support a 4 percent increase, they get a 4 percent increase, and write a formula into the law that