

SENATOR MOREHEAD: Mr. President, members of the body, I have been listening and I think more people have probably been listening to this issue than we maybe give our colleagues credit for for several different reasons. First of all we are all aware of how important fringe benefits are, and we've discussed that here this morning. It has been said over and over in this body something about salaries, let's give the money to the salaries. Well, I think we've proven fairly consistently, one way or another, that probably that is a dream on the horizon and that's not going to come. But one argument that was made this morning was the fact that well if we grant this retirement option that we are going to have a lot of the older teachers get out, and because there aren't many people coming into the teaching profession, which is debatable,...

SPEAKER NICHOL: (Gavel.) Ladies and gentlemen, we can't hear the speaker. When I can't hear the speaker that is too loud, so please hold it down. Thank you, Senator Morehead.

SENATOR MOREHEAD: When you can't hear this speaker, that is loud. (Laugh.) So, if you don't have teachers coming into...or people coming into the teaching profession then, my goodness, the salaries will go up. Well, you know what? Maybe that would be something highly desirable here. Coming in the back door, by giving this option, lo and behold we are going to get salaries up. Now I think that is a good argument. That is a really good argument for this. And maybe that is something that you haven't been thinking about, something that we've been working for in the profession all along and we're going to get it this way. Now I think that is marvelous. We are talking about people not entering the profession. Do you know what we're doing in the State of Nebraska? We are educating a lot of teachers, and they are leaving. They are leaving to go to other states where the benefits are better, and the retirement system is better. With this adoption, of Senator Pappas's 3 percent, that still leaves Nebraska 49th. Why wouldn't they leave? If they can go some place else, if they can cross the border into Wyoming, after going to Chadron, or they can go to Colorado and have better benefits, there is not that much difference between Chadron and Cheyenne, I don't believe, but there is a lot more benefits. And, yes, it is costly. But I guess that depends how you measure cost. If you measure cost strictly in