

after another. I see this simply as shifting. For this point to guarantee a 3 percent raise in state salaries, I think that has to be addressed. I'm currently taking a survey of...in my area, the largest employer of state employees. And I will gladly share that with anyone. But I find that the salaries are more than comparable. I think that at this time, and with the situation as it is, we would be remiss in guaranteeing a 3 percent increase at this time.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Thank you, Senator Nelson. Senator Vickers, then Senator Lynch.

SENATOR VICKERS: Mr. President, members, I think this is an interesting discussion. Quite frankly I don't really care whether we send it back to committee or not. I think the issue is going to be resolved out here on the floor of the Legislature. I think that point has been well made. I think we are in the process of that right now. The fact of the matter is we have had this issue before the Business and Labor Committee, as Senator Barrett had indicated. I'm a member of that committee, and we killed the bills. I think we killed the bills because we thought it was a bad idea. There has been talk about a level playing field. I think that is rather humorous as well because for years now we've heard from the political subdivisions in this state, and many of us on the floor of this Legislature have criticized them for the amount of funds that they spent. Yet their response has been, whether it be a county, a school district, or a city, or any other political subdivision, many times their response has been we had to raise the taxes because the Commission of Industrial Relations forced us to raise the salaries of our employees. Now when that other shoe, when that other shoe starts to pinch, as far as our employees are concerned, suddenly we say wait a minute, wait a minute, we want to change the rules of the game. It is alright to force, through the Commission of Industrial Relations, a school district board to raise the property taxes to provide for a salary increase, mandated by the Commission of Industrial Relations, but it is certainly not all right for this board, the Nebraska Legislature, to have to do it. That is really the issue. If we want to talk about a level playing field, let's make it level all over. If we want to talk about all taxes, let's make it apply all over. If we want to talk about all employees, let's make it apply all over. I've got an amendment up there that simply says that for one year it is going to apply to all political