

SENATOR LABEDZ: (Response inaudible.)

SPEAKER NICHOL: Question has been called. Do I see five hands? I do. The question is, shall debate cease? All those in favor vote aye, opposed nay. Record, Mr. Clerk, please.

CLERK: 29 ayes, 0 nays to cease debate, Mr. President.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Debate has ceased. Senator Lynch, did you wish to close please.

SENATOR LYNCH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members. Quickly and briefly, you've heard an awful lot of the arguments that apparently justify putting off for a year what, in my opinion, is a responsibility we have and should have faced right now and for the last two years. During all of this debate we still haven't answered the question of who is really negotiating with who I'm not quite sure. I'm sure it is not the Appropriations Committee. It must be somebody in the administration. We were given the argument that we can get you one way or the other. I'm sure Senator Hannibal never meant it that way necessarily, but he said, in the sense in the form of a threat, that okay, if you negotiate and you develop an amount of money for salaries, and we can't afford it, we'll just simply cut the budgets of those agencies back, and then you can lay off a few people. That has been used down through the years in all labor-management negotiations. And that is always a threat. But you see that has nothing to do at all with the principle and concept and the purpose of what we are discussing here this morning, and that is simply the right of the employees to negotiate. We are assuming, in fact we are probably giving the impression that the employees are going to act in bad faith. I think some would be tickled to death to get the 3 percent and run. It's not the intention of any of us to damage, interfere, or complicate that at all. I want to, at this time, compliment the Appropriations Committee and those who worked to put together a piece of paper that would indicate that could exist and that we can in fact afford it and fund it. But it got muddled up along the way with these little innuendos that even though the Supreme Court did decide that the state has the obligation to negotiate because we, in our powerful position, can do it, we'll decide not to, and not take any chances this year, or until we get a level