

to increase these salaries. I would suggest also that in my conversation with the businessmen across the State of Nebraska, they do not envision the kind of year that will justify increased salaries for their employees. Most of them will be glad to hold those salaries level. I would ask you to support the amendment.

SENATOR CARSTEN: Thank you, Senator Schmit. Senator Harris on the Schmit amendment to the bill please.

SENATOR HARRIS: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I rise to oppose the Schmit amendment. Senator Schmit and I worked together over a long period of time in regard to the current agricultural policies and have accurately projected together the effects that it would have upon the budget of the State of Nebraska, notwithstanding some of the predictions that were being made, and some of the assumptions that were being made that agriculture simply didn't matter. I do want to caution at this point, not on just this point, but on others that are coming, that we need to avoid getting caught in a trap and that trap is that we have a downturn in our economy, which we do have, and a very hard downturn that is going to last for some time, but we don't want to get caught in that trap of making it worse. Now these state employees are entitled to their raise. They are entitled to a piece of the future of Nebraska. If we want to get more efficient, that is fine. If we want to make sure that all the monies are being spent on a timely basis for the things that need to be done, that is fine, but we need to keep our good solid employees on board, and also when you start making cuts like this, it sends a signal to potential employees. I just think it is not the time to do this. They have taken the brunt of any cuts that have taken place over the past few years. There are many places that I would be glad to join Senator Schmit in cutting, be glad to join him, but this is not one. I urge you to oppose the amendment. Thank you.

SENATOR CARSTEN: Thank you, Senator Harris. Senator Warner, on the Schmit amendment, please.

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I would rise to oppose the amendment as well. If you wish to have zero increase, the appropriate way to do it is to go ahead and not vote...vote to kill the bill when it reaches Final Reading, but as of today, I think the bill should be advanced as is. And incidentally, if you want to kill the salary bill, you should