

SENATOR SCOFIELD: Members of the Legislature, I rise to support the proposal that Senator Johnson has placed before us. You know, I want to vote for this bill so bad I can just taste it, being a former teacher and knowing how difficult that job is and the justification for giving people options to get out of the profession, but I just don't think this is the way to do it. I don't think it is actuarially sound and I cannot in good conscience bring myself to vote for a bill that just given the numbers that we've heard tossed around here on the floor this morning, nobody seems to have any agreement on just what exactly this bill is going to cost us. And I think the other points that have been made about the long-term impact and what is only reasonable to expect to do for other state employees deserves some very serious consideration. I think there are probably a lot of places that we could build some better retirement systems for all public employees if we really sat down and looked at them and perhaps looked at some of the private models that are available out there. My convictions I think were reinforced this weekend when I went to Grand Island and I spoke to a state conference of educators, the Delta Kappa Gamma Society. That's made up of teachers of all ages, many of whom have been retired for some time, many of whom are looking forward to the possibility of an early retirement, many of whom are young teachers that are going to pay the bill on this and there is a tremendous inequity out there in the way we're dealing with retirement systems for teachers. We have on the one hand, teachers in their seventies and eighties who we aren't going to be able to do much for probably, immediately, certainly nothing by this bill that are living on almost a pittance in some instances and on the other hand we've got young teachers coming up that are going to pay this bill and if you look at the trend we have toward an aging society with people living longer and fortunately, generally being healthier and able to work longer, I think we have to rethink our whole philosophy toward retirement in that direction to avoid some very serious fiscal impacts. So I would commit myself here publicly to you and to teachers to work with Senator Johnson and come up with a better system than this and I would urge you to give us a chance to see if we can't do that and to avoid some of the problems that I think this particular bill will cause even though it is being done with the best of intentions. Thank you.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Abboud, please.

SENATOR ABOUD: Question.