

show that it will not be a liability that they cannot, or that they do not have the money there right now to...to support it.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Nelson. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Just briefly, Mr. Speaker, members. Again, I understand why there's a strong desire and support for adopting the bill without these committee amendments, but I again rise in support of the committee amendments. It's simply, when you've been on the Retirement Committee and you've seen the big picture, you've seen all the different groups with their desire for improved retirement benefits, you realize you've got to...have to have some rational basis to make decisions. And that rational basis in the Retirement Committee has always been these principles we've adopted. And one of those principles is equity, equity across systems. Yes, it's a different system. The Omaha school teachers are in a different system than the rest of the state, but they're very similar in many ways. And there's an equity question, and that equity question even applies to other types of public employees who look at that system and have aspirations as well. And so every decision you make can't be looked at in isolation. It's got to be looked at in the context of retirement plans and benefits. And if it makes sense, and it follows the principles, and it's affordable, then you take that step and you try and do what you can to help improve retirement benefits. But where it's out of step, where it doesn't follow the principles, you're heading for trouble because once you break that ground and move into an area where you make decisions based without some solid ground and logic, you're heading for trouble, not only in this area, but in other areas as well. And so in retirement at least we've tried to maintain these principles. I'd ask you to retain them once again and support the committee amendments. And I'll give the rest of my time to Senator Nelson.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Wesely. Senator Abboud. Senator Nelson, excuse me.

SENATOR NELSON: I...one other thing, particularly for the new senators, or if you've not served on Retirement Committee, one other thing that I must...must tell you, and we're...my concern is COLA's for the older retirees, not only in the public system but the Omaha system. Once you take that retirement there is no increase like there are...there is in other systems. But, in essence, the teachers that are retiring today are receiving an