

standard or a criteria that is of benefit to the state at large, and it can include a number of things. But one of those things in my mind is providing health insurance to workers involved with the project that's funded, in part, with the state's tax dollars that we are providing to provide that assistance. I don't think that's unfair. I don't think that's unreasonable. We are not asking for an employer mandate for everybody in the state, although nationally they are talking about that. We are just saying in this one very small area, with this one very small assistance program dealing with ethanol, that we ask that when they are building these plants that the contractors have some sort of health insurance for their employees, not an unreasonable step. And we are talk...when we talk about the problems of the state in providing for health care, we know, as I said before, we have about 150,000 Nebraskans, a little less than 10 percent of us, that are uninsured. These Nebraskans are, the vast majority of them are working adults and their children, and these working adults have low income jobs without health care, frequently without child care, struggle through to try and make it on their own with a job. They are not on the welfare system because if they are they'd have Medicaid. If they were elderly, they'd have Medicare. If they had a good paying job with benefits, they'd have health insurance. If they were out there and had the wealth, they could buy the insurance themselves. Now these are the working poor that we are talking about, and some of them, yes, they may be, in fact, employed by contractors that may bid on these contracts. And if it helps some of them get health insurance, I think that is a good thing. We are helping to subsidize these contractors. I think the fair thing to do in response is to say providing health insurance is a reasonable expectation that the state has in return for benefiting from the monies that we are putting up to help with these projects. Now, ultimately, as some have said, Senator Witek and others have said, well, this could lead to other things, and maybe other things will be forthcoming. I don't think so. I don't think you will see the State of Nebraska doing an employer mandate. I don't know that we are going to follow the steps of the handful of other states that have taken that because it will drive people out of Nebraska, unless you do something like that on a national basis, and it doesn't look like it is going to happen nationally. We are simply unable to do it. But in a small way with these particular projects, I don't see that we are going to lose ground because one of the things that happens is you level the playing field on the contracts that are being bid on. Currently if you have a