

three and a half percent of the population, and the next step is that those fifty-five thousand people we have all assumed have been the poor and the elderly who don't know about the credit system and do not know that they can apply for that credit. Well, there are figures that I don't have documented particularly but would seem to indicate that perhaps those fifty-five thousand people not receiving the credit are in nursing homes or the penitentiary or in other institutions that do not have to buy food for themselves and not actually pay a sales tax on food, and so the argument against the credit system on that point I think is not accurate, and down the line my feeling is that the credit system is the superior system. I am speaking on LB 16. I am speaking about the repeal of the food sales tax, and I am going to be supporting this bill up through at least Final Reading because I think we have got to do something on the credit, and until there is a threat that the repeal is actually going to be passed, my feeling is many of you unfortunately are not going to see the wisdom of increasing the credit, and I feel very badly about that. I think the people that lose from that inaction are the poor and the moderate income people of the state that deserve better. So I wanted to explain my vote on that. I have not changed my opinion that the credit system is, in fact, the superior system to the step taken in LB 16, but my feeling is that we need to apply the pressure to get that credit raised, otherwise I have trouble with the credit system. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Cope.

SENATOR COPE: Mr. President and members, I have not supported the elimination of a food tax in the past years and I continue to oppose it for the very simple reason that I believe with the \$26.00 that I certainly will vote for, refund, that this will take care of the average person's refund for the amount of money that they have spent for food tax, not purchases made in a grocery store, and I think there is the problem that so many people face. They come home with a bill for \$45.00 and they think that is food, and they forget that probably half of it is for other items. Consider this, figuring on a \$26.00 refund and figuring a family of four, each person would have purchases during the year of \$875.00 worth of food. For four people, that is \$3500.00. Now I don't know exactly what amount...what percentage is figured for food, but I would think that one-third is more than average, but I am figuring a third. That means that a person, a family of four, average family, the salary would be \$10,500 to break even. Now we constantly talk about this is the tax that is hurting the poor. I think this bears it out.