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LB 647

committee's amendments of \$56,000,000. I think it is a good program. We have been talking so long now on property tax relief, especially for those that need it most. These are people that need it most because they are low income. It doesn't seem like we are going to have any property tax relief...meaningful property tax relief this year, and if we truly want to help the low income maintain their own homes and stay in their own homes, I think this is a good way to go. We have got the income guidelines and I think as high as we can possibly go. A married couple, \$9400 is not very much money, and they would only receive a 20 percent homestead exemption on the first \$40,000. If they are under \$7400, they would receive 100 percent. I don't think very many of us can live on less than \$7400 a year and still maintain a home with the high cost of utilities and so forth. I urge you to adopt this amendment to LB 647. As I said, the cost would be \$42,000,000, possibly lower, depending on the situation as far as unemployment and so forth. I should mention one more thing. There are so many that will probably be unemployed in the next year or so and are, at this very moment. I think their first worry is, how am I going to pay my property tax? I have lost my job. I am receiving unemployment. But the worry of maintaining their home, regardless of what their ages, 21 to 65 or 75, it is still a worry. They still want to live in their own home. Possibly, this person or this family will only receive the homestead exemption one year, because the following year he may obtain a position and be back earning the necessary wages to support his family, but at least the year that he is out of a job and low income we would be able to give him anywhere from 20 to 60 or 80 or even a 100 percent property tax relief. Thank you.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Johnson.

SENATOR JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker and members of the body, I want to discuss with you for a few minutes some of the considerations that one has to have in deciding how to cast a vote on the several homestead bills that are before us. In many respects Senator Labeledz's amendment to LB 647, which truly is Governor Thone's proposal, is very alluring. It is alluring because for the first time in our history we provide a need based homestead allowance to persons below the age of 65, and I think that is an attractive feature. It is alluring because for the first time in our homestead history we provide a special category for persons above the age of 75, and I think that is attractive also because one of the things that clearly is happening these days is that more and more persons are not retiring at age 65, but rather they are continuing to work. They are continuing to