

increased, they are not increased for those people who are already covered. What happens is that you provide for coverage of people who are a little more highly paid. You add on on the top end in the recovery. The single employee with no payroll deductions beyond themselves, making around \$19,000 will get, under the current plan, \$245. Under whatever amendments we will put on, that particular person will still get \$245. The person that is working 40 hours a week at minimum wage, under the current plan, would get about \$89. They'll still get \$89. It's just added on on the top end. That's a decision that this body has to make. I think that what we're doing is reasonable and fair. I'm not an employer nor an employee and will never benefit. It was my opinion that we needed to increase workers' compensation. The amount in the committee amendment sounded fair to me. It was a compromise. No one gets what they want. Again, this amendment increases the recovery for some people that are making...that will have a gross income of up to about \$23,000, 22,000 something. The committee amendments take it up to 20,500 and something. And bear in mind that for individual people that percentage of recovery certainly differs depending upon the personal deductions that they might have. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Chizek, you are next. Your light was inadvertently removed. Proceed.

SENATOR CHIZEK: Thank you. One of the things that I wanted to point out, there was some discussion yesterday about the weekly benefit amount versus all it has done towards retraining and so on. I'll tell you a story about a guy that called me last night who got injured at a chemical plant and his lungs were injured and he was retrained; went on and graduated from college with a degree in chemical engineering. The amazing thing about it is, now that he is retrained, nobody will hire him because he is a walking time bomb, he is a walking time bomb. So we spent money to train him, but he can't get a job. How do you answer somebody like that, Senator? Senator Hefner has an employee that was injured. How do you answer these people when you have these permanent injuries? Do we say, oh, we'll retrain him, they will do something else? No. Now is the time to be fair. Over five years, I've watched the games that this body has played on workmen's compensation and I won't be a part of it anymore. I can't, in good conscience, be a part of it anymore and I will tell you that I will be able to stand up in the morning when I shave and look in the mirror and when I get down on my knees and pray to my Maker, I'll be able to say I did what