

reasonable one that in some form or fashion I think reflects what the economy has done over the years.

SPEAKER BARRETT: One minute.

SENATOR HALL: We worry about the economy and how it reflects what the business individual has to deal with on that side of the ledger, but we fail to reflect what the unemployed worker has to deal with in terms of the economy. He also has to pay those bills when he is unemployed through no faults of his own and none of us like that. The fact of the matter is, unless we change the requirement benefits, and I'm not here advocating that today, I will, I think, at some point in the future. There is no harm in increasing the benefit level through the Lindsay amendment because you're still going to have to meet the requirements that the State of Nebraska imposes on those unemployed workers and it is by far the most difficult state in the nation to qualify for what I would call reasonable and more likely, meager benefits that we allow for. I would urge you to adopt Senator Lindsay's amendment.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Hefner, followed by Senator Coordsen.

SENATOR HEFNER: Mr. President and members of the body, let me explain unemployment compensation a little better to you than it has been explained here. The employer pays on the first \$7,000 of an employee's wages and if you're at the maximum amount and this is for positive account balances, positive account employers, you would pay 3.4 times 7,000 would be \$238 a year that you would pay into this trust fund. Okay, the average small business in Nebraska has five employees, so you can see that that cost is \$1,190 a year. It is a cost of doing business. The employee doesn't pay any part of this. The employer pays it all and I just wanted to draw that to your attention. Okay, about employees qualifying. Yes, the Department of Labor does a good job or I feel they do a good job and we have some of the laws in statutes. Also they have rules and regulations they go by before an employee can qualify. So I'd say they are doing a good job there, but we want them to because we want to keep this trust fund solvent so when we have a recession, and I'm sure that we're approaching one now because the economy goes in cycles, goes up for a while, levels off and maybe drops back down, but we want that fund solvent so that when the employers need to lay off some employees that there is