

abuser. So we drafted the amendment that is being handed out, two pages. And basically the wording in this provides that when a person is fired, because of the provisions that are in AM2508 in gross misconduct and, if they enroll in an approved drug treatment program and continue in that program, in order to encourage them to do that we should find a way of paying the unemployment. We can't take it out of the trust fund, nor should the employees experience account suffer from that and perhaps the rate that they might be paying. But as society maybe we should do something. In the Department of Labor there is a special contingent fund that accumulates from fines and penalties that can be used at the direction of the Legislature or the Governor for job related issues. It appeared to me that there might be no better use for these funds than to encourage unemployed persons to seek treatment, to have a little mercy on their family, to provide some amount of income to them while they're undergoing this process. So, with that in mind, I introduced this amendment just a few minutes ago. And it also provides that, if there isn't enough money in the contingency fund, that the Legislature, from time to time, would appropriate such funds as necessary from the General Fund. Before all of the fiscal conservatives come unglued on this floor, as I recall the estimate from the Department of Labor there would probably no fewer than 100 people in the course of a year be discharged under LB 1173, and certainly not all of those would be willing to go into a treatment program. If they all were willing, and if they all were at the maximum rate, it would take a little less than...well, on an annual basis, if you always had 100 in the program, it would take a little less than \$500,000 to pay that unemployment, to give them a little money for groceries or whatever, to put a cheap pair of tennis shoes on the feet of their children. So I offer this amendment to the Hefner amendment as something that I believe that we should do. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Discussion on the amendment offered by Senator Coordsen? Senator Hefner, would you care to discuss it? Senator Morrissey on deck.

SENATOR HEFNER: Mr. President and members of the body, I rise to support this amendment. I think this is a terrific amendment, because I know like in Business and Labor Committee we were talking about how can we help these people, how can we help these people that need help so badly. And it says right here that they will receive the benefits, the same amount as we