

different course of action it was on an amendment with which I disagree. I think the idea is good though, but the cost of going to these drug treatment programs is so prohibitive that somebody who has lost a job certainly could not afford to go there, so if the person had lost a job due to drug use, maybe the only way to get unemployment and afford to go to the drug treatment program is to sell drugs, but then you get to selling drugs and it gets so good you say, hey, I don't want to go to drug treatment, I don't want unemployment compensation, I don't want to go back to work, this is a gold mine that I had been missing out on so I'm glad that I got fired. That might sound facetious, but it's not. In too many instances the Legislature with the composition of this one, a conservative "Repelican" dominated Legislature, there is a leaning toward what is called the right wing and that tendency with that group is to violate people's civil liberties, to be very lacking in compassion and impose harsh punishments on others that they themselves would not want imposed on them. If you find businessmen who get caught cheating on their income tax or wealthy farmers cheating in the PIK program or getting deficiency payments they're not entitled to, the first thing they want is mercy. But when it comes to an ordinary person who has nothing to sell but his or her labor, then slam the door on them. Throw the book at them. Throw them out of work and say they did something that was illegal and they ought to be ruined and punished forever for it. I doubt if there is anybody on this floor who hates drugs more than I do. There may be somebody who hates drugs as much as I do. I hate drugs but I don't hate the people who are unfortunate enough to be addicted to them and what we're talking about in this bill are people addicted to drugs, talking about people who have a sickness which is different even from cancer because this is one that people cannot control. This is one that people cannot control. And at a time when I think the society should be showing a streak of humaneness and recognizing how serious this problem is, we are considering legislation that will put people already addicted into a worse set of circumstances. If there is to be an amendment seriously considered like the one before us today, there should be some standards. I'd like to ask Senator Hefner a question if I may.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Hefner, would you respond.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: And his response will set the tone to what else I might say. Senator Hefner, do you think that all people similarly situated should be equal before the law?