

programs. I understand Senator Wesely's concern, certainly it is a concern, but the bill as it is amended will put the workplace in a better shape and the abuser of substances in a better position to become free of that substance than our current system, than our current system which is either seven to ten weeks disqualification or total disqualification, period, irregardless of what they do. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Hall, please.

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Mr. President and members, just very briefly, I rise in support of Senator Wesely's amendment. What he does is say that if we're going to impose a sentence on these individuals once they have been found guilty of drug use in the workplace, that sentence being that they have to attend treatment which is fine and I applaud that, that there ought to be treatment made available to them, and that isn't the case right now. I happen to be familiar with one treatment program in Omaha that has about a three month waiting list and it is the only one that I know of that takes people at a reduced charge or no charge in the metro area, and you can't get in, flat can't get in and they have a reduced price. They happen to be a treatment program that contracts with the State of Nebraska. Senator Wesely says, look, we're going to do this, fine, we ought to be honest about it and say that we don't want drugs in the workplace, we want to make it available and we want the employers to say we're willing to do that, we're willing to do that for our employees. Because what you do if you have the penalty there, you take away their unemployment, you have the penalty there that says you are not going to be eligible for those benefits unless you go to treatment. You have no treatment available because (a) it's either not covered by insurance or the employer says, no, we're not going to pay for it, you hamper, you discourage those employees who recognize the fact that they have a drug problem from ever coming forward on their own. They just say, no. I mean, there's no benefit in me doing this. I lose out all the way around. I just have to continue to try to get through this on my own or I run the risk at some point of being found out and then at that point, not only am I out on the street without a job, I don't have unemployment to tide me over till I'm able to find another one and the last thing on their mind is looking at the issue with regard to recovery and a treatment program, and that should be the first thing. It should be the first thing on everyone's mind. If it's the first thing on our mind when we amend this