

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you, Senator Schimek. The Chair is also having a problem. (Gavel.)

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: The house is not in order. The speaker is entitled to be heard.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you, Mr. President. As I say, this bill is targeted to low income families who are renters, to people over 55 who are renters and to people with disabilities who are renters. Income includes taxable income and it is approximately, it will cover approximately those whose income goes up to 13,000 to 15,000. It depends on how many people are in their family, those kinds of things. The higher the income, the less the refund. It's on a sliding scale. The Kansas program, you might be interested to know, in their state they have about 950,000 households who are renters. In Nebraska, we have about 608,000 households so we have only about two-thirds the number of renters that Kansas does. They have about 15,000 claimants under this program. I guess you could estimate that we might have about a third less, maybe about 10,000, but that's kind of iffy. It depends on how much publicity the program is given. Possibly, in its first year because it would be well publicized, it would have more impact than it would in later years. Kansas has had the program in place for 20 years and it still has only 15,000 claimants. I guess, with that, I would like to make myself available to answer questions on this. It's really quite a simple straightforward bill. A lot of it deals...a lot of the printed pages deal with its implementation and how it would be implemented by the Department of Revenue. Thank you, Mr. President.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. For discussion of the Schimek amendment, the Chair recognizes Senator Wesely, followed by Senators Hall, Robak and Moore. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members, the Governor has spoken and Senator Schimek and I have heard her voice of concern about this legislation. Actually, that's a joke. We...Senator Schimek and I talked about this concept of concern about the renters long before the Governor had expressed that as one of her main concerns about the bill. And, as we have looked at the situation, we have put together this amendment in hopes that we could address that concern. But one