

in terms of disqualifications in this state. This added T, so we just about wiped out the alphabet. Granted, that's a legitimate issue. But, ladies and gentlemen, it's a legitimate issue on its own. It should not and should never have been tied to an increase for unemployment benefits. That's where the trouble started with this bill, that's why I jumped up and said, if you're going to disqualify these people, once we adopted or had Senator Hefner's amendment before us, you have to at least have a standard of proof in place. And so I put into that bill Senator Bernard-Stevens' drug testing bill, that provided a standard of proof, I put into that amendment. Then that amendment was adopted to the bill. I opposed it, as did many others who wanted to see 315 advance on its own merits. Never before that I can remember in the six short years I've been here has an increase ever been tied to a disqualification provision in the unemployment area. And, granted, you know only 300 people have been disqualified last year in the gross misconduct area. And the gross misconduct is the most stringent area of disqualification and unemployment. Three hundred is a lot, compared to what other states do. And when you look at all the other areas that you can be disqualified for in Nebraska, or at least be delayed, there are no states who come close for disqualification purposes, come close to what Nebraska does. But yet we're going to deny that benefit increase of \$10 to those people because of an amendment that got adopted. What we ought to do, instead of bracket the bill, is strip the provisions for the disqualification out of it, advance the bill as it was originally intended to be advanced, as it was advanced out of committee and as people agreed to it. When we adopted the Hefner amendment then things got messed up, then everything got out of whack. They should not be tied together, whether they're illegal activities or not. Those illegal activities currently can be addressed under the gross misconduct disqualification in our statutes. Yeah, maybe they need to be addressed, but they should be addressed separately, and we should not tie an increase, one that a major newspaper in the state has supported last year, one that hasn't been increased since 1987. It ought to be done on its own. Instead of bracketing the bill we ought to strip everything out except for the increase and then advance it onto Final. It would be terrible not to increase unemployment this year, but you shouldn't tie the two together.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Lynch, please.