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SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Robak, please.

SENATOR ROBAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Senator Pirsch and Senator Labeledz have brought up some very good points here. I thank them very much for that, but I have a question I think should be answered here. Whatever happened to the enterprise zones? Promoted with fanfare by then U.S. Representative Jack Kemp, that's K-e-m-p, in 1980 and endorsed by the Reagan administration, that's R-e-a-g-e-n, in 1982, the concept reduced capital gain taxes and special job training credits for employers in designated poverty areas, made it into federal law only in the most skeletal form in the 1987 Housing Act. The dream was never realized. Well, not in Washington. Michael Alan Wolf, that's W-o-l-f, a law professor at the University of Richmond, admits to having been a little surprised when he surveyed the enterprise zone scene at the end of the 1980s and found that 37 states actually had programs in place. A few of these were simply holding tanks for anticipated federal money, but noted...but most were live programs with designated areas selected and sizeable state subsidies available to employers willing to locate in distressed areas. Wolf finds that more successful of the zone programs have long since transcended the original ideological colorations and attracted as much support from liberal Democrats as from conservative Republican like Jack Kemp, that's K-e-m-p. Moreover they are moving away from the original idea of bringing in new employers to revive neighborhoods and toward a role as a part of regional economic development package, geared as much toward retaining existing businesses as attracting new ones. As he examines diverse array of...diverse array of programs, Wolf, that's W-o-l-f, sees a diverse array of problems, political compromises for some states to approve far more zones that can possibly make sense. The Louisiana Legislature liked the idea of enterprise zones so much it created 473 of them. Other states offered benefits to private firms without demanding more than the sketchiest information about how many disadvantaged people they planned to hire and without extracting any commitments to stay in the distressed area for a significant length of time. Still Wolf concludes the experience has to be seen as encouraging. The diversity of subsidized projects alone has been impressive, ranging from huge factories in New Orleans to Mom and Pop businesses in Chicago. The relationship between participating companies and state and local governments have been far more