

said, well, what are you trying to do, put us out of business? And, well, not really, but I realize that this bill, as it originally was proposed, went up 30 percent, went up from 3.25 to 4.25, and so I want to support Senator Coordsen's amendment. His, at least, feathers this increase in because a 30 percent wage increase at one time is, I feel, just too much for a small mom and pop business to absorb. It will put some of them out of business, that's what it will do. And I don't think we're down here to do that. And I just want to read part of one letter that I received and maybe some of you received it too. But it goes on to say, it says, "Our employees are pleased with their wages. And right now we're paying \$3.40 to \$4.00 an hour." And then he's goes on to say, "Where's the free enterprise system? Small mom and pop family operations have to have a break. At least follow the federal guidelines to exclude small businesses under \$500,000 annual gross sales from the proposed increase." And so, folks, I think we need to be real careful on this bill because we certainly don't want to put these small mom and pop businesses out of business, out of existence. The cost of business is going up every day. When you do any repair work or if you have to build a new building or if you rent a building, this goes up. Raw materials are going up. And it was just last year that we increased the sales tax and you said, well, that shouldn't make too much difference because, you know, you collect the sales tax. But every time you increase that final price, even if it is partly sales tax, it has an effect on the buying of your business. But I just think that Senator Coordsen's amendment is a little fairer. It gives these small businesses a chance to feather that cost in to their particular business. I don't think we want to put any of these small businesses out of business because we certainly need them. And they provide a lot of help to these part-time students. They are...they mainly operate during the summer months when the students have time to work or sometimes they go into the fall and the students will keep working for a while. But I would just say that this will give a chance for the free enterprise system to work a little better and I encourage you to support Senator Coordsen's amendment.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Hefner. Senator Hall, followed by Senator Schmit and Senator Coordsen. Senator Hall.

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Madam President. I rise in opposition to Senator Coordsen's amendment and that's probably not a surprise to anyone. The amendment takes and phases a proposal