

March 5, 1991

LB 297

we are talking about...

PRESIDENT MOUL: Time.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: ...will support this bill.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Seeing no one else wishing to debate the issue, do you have closing, Senator Coordsen?

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you, Madam President and members of the body. First, I would be remiss, as a farmer, if I did not thank Senator Chambers for his kind and more compassionate dissertation upon the ease of surviving in rural Nebraska as a simple agrarian. Having said that, do I think the minimum wage is too high? Of course not, that is not the issue today. The issue today is whether we statutorily impact those employers who, for one reason or the other, fall under our state guidelines with a 27 percent increase on April 1, 1991, in the wages. The issue could be, though that is debatable, whether on that point in time a number of jobs may cease to exist, but that is not the purpose of this amendment either. The purpose of this amendment, and I will go through it one more time, is that with 297 as written, we have for small employers on April 1, 1991, unless they seek to avail themselves of the training wage for a portion of their employees, a \$4.25 minimum wage, a jump from the current \$3.35. If their sales are in excess of \$362,500 and \$500,000, they fall under the federal minimum wage in the notch and have a federal minimum wage of \$3.35. If their sales are over \$500,000, the minimum wage again jumps up to \$4.25 an hour. My amendment would cut the initial impact in that the state minimum wage would increase on July 1, 1991, to \$3.80 per hour, which is higher than the \$3.61 an hour that might be available to some employees under the federal and state law, and then at the expiration of the training wage, April 1, 1993, we would go to \$4.25 an hour. What should the minimum wage be? That is always an auction. It is an auction on the federal level. It is an auction here. Every person out there wants more money than what they are paid. Most people want a job. Most people want a job that pays substantially more than what they are currently receiving, no matter what that figure might be. Let's advance 297 with this amendment and reduce the shock to those employers who come under the state minimum wage. I would encourage your support of this amendment. Thank you.