

SENATOR MORRISSEY: Thank you, Senator Robinson. Senator Hall.

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Mr. President, members, I rise in strong opposition to the kill motion on LB 297. The issue here is a minimum wage, and Senator Robinson, I truly think, believes in his convictions in what he says here. The issue is that I truly believe in my convictions, and what I'm trying to do through this bill. And what this bill does is it brings parity, if you will, to every employee in the state. Just because someone happens to be a small businessman doesn't mean they are a poor businessman. Doesn't mean that they're not a good businessman because they have fewer number of employees than someone who may have 2,000 employees, and is just meeting their payroll. But because they are governed by the federal standards they have to meet those federal standards, and have a minimum wage that mirrors that. Size has nothing to do with whether or not someone is a good businessman, or a poor businessman, whether a business flourishes, or whether it falls on the rocks. There is no correlation there at all, none whatsoever. What the federal government has said is that if you fall under the threshold of ten employees, and half a million dollar gross, we're going to let the state make the determination. We're going to let the state make the policy on what the minimum wage will be. What we're doing here in LB 297 is saying that our state employees, and they are state employees, they live here. They are not employees of the state, but they are employees within the state. We think they ought to be treated just the same as somebody who has the protection of the federal government. We think that our protection, our rights to protect those people are no less, should be no less than what the federal government offers; everybody else who happens to work for somebody that meets the qualifications of the federal standard. That's all. Will there be people affected? Very possibly there will. Will they be to the magnitude that Senator Robinson argues? I say no, I say no. Did I go talk to small business people, small business owners? I owned two small businesses, don't brag about it, but I did. I currently have an interest in another one right now. I know what it's like to have two, or three employees. I paid them minimum wage or better, much better in a couple cases, much better. Did I make a lot of money out of those? Not bloody likely. Let me tell you, what happens is, and Senator Robinson knows this, you pay the help, very times, better than you pay yourself. You're always the last guy to get paid in a small business. You're always the last guy to get paid. That's what happens. Did I