

the federal law only allows for the exemption, 10 employers (sic) for retailers, doesn't apply to other types of businesses. They would still be subject and are currently subject to the federal standard. This is a proposal that at best is, I guess, offensive because what it does, in my opinion, is it says that we're going to talk about how it affects business and we are going to, I guess, ask a very rhetorical question on where the lobby is for the young people. Well, the lobby is right here, he's carrying the bill, Senator Robinson, and I will tell you it is a proposal that is very fair in the way that it has been approached. It's been...it's, I guess, so fair that there are at least 10 states right now that have a minimum wage higher than the federal standard. We don't have to be on the cutting edge, what we would like to do is be on the table. And, in this case, what we do is we say we're going to mirror the federal change with regard to minimum wage. We're going to take the current state's minimum wage from 3.35 an hour to 4.25 which federal government does effective July 1 of this year. It was a two-part increase. We chose to ignore that increase last year and the bill came back this year so that the increase could take effect. It's a 90-cent an hour increase, 90-cent an hour increase to \$4.25, \$4.25. It is a modest proposal at best. It...you get into a real circular argument because, you know, folks stand up and say how poorly sections of the state may be doing. In fact, part of that problem is because of the wage scale there. If they had more money to spend, those businesses would be doing better. It works that way, it really does. We don't talk about that. We talk about protecting the small businesses that work on very small margins. I don't have any problem with that. But if you don't have people who will stay there to work because the jobs don't pay enough, don't come crying and wonder why folks are no longer staying in rural Nebraska, because this is one of the reasons why. It's proposals like this that cloak themselves in the argument of trying to protect small business and worry about small business in small-town Nebraska but, in fact, they do exactly the opposite. They drive the work force away because you don't make them compete. You don't make them compete with some of the more urban areas and say, yeah, we think enough about the people that live in our neck of the woods that we're going to pay them the same wage. We're going to take care of them just as good because they live here and not going to give an advantage to somebody who happens to reside in a different part of the state...