

government. The use of the Unemployment Trust Fund money is strictly reserved for weekly benefits. The money that accumulates in the Contingency Fund is available for use basically as the state in which it exists determines to use that money. Historically in Nebraska, up until the last few years, that money has been used to provide for unexpected expenditures of the Department of Labor. It has been used to provide buildings through no cost to the General Fund. It has been used to provide data processing equipment and other office materials to the Department of Labor at no cost to the General Fund, and other types of activities like that, that are related to the administration of the Unemployment Trust Fund. A number of years ago, a new trend began to develop and, by the way, this fund had accumulated to the amount of about 2 million dollars some years past. The body of the Legislature decided, through the appropriations process, to allocate money to the community colleges for the purpose of job training and this amount began rather modestly and did grow somewhat over the years. Then several years ago the body of the Legislature, through the appropriations process, decided to appropriate 1 million dollars for a...created and appropriated 1 million dollars to the Department of Economic Development for a job training cash fund that was supposed to be used for job training to enhance companies to grow or locate in Nebraska. On the broader scheme of things, Nebraska is in a somewhat unique position in many respects and one of which is that, while we have a relatively low unemployment rate compared to other states, we are finding that the duration of employment and the consequent drain on the trust fund has been growing recently. The Unemployment Trust Fund has about 145 million dollars in it. The targeted figure, and there is a set of guidelines published by the United States Department of Labor, would say that we should maintain a balance to accommodate a recession of between a hundred and seventy and two hundred and eighty million dollars in that fund. It is my belief and the belief of others that the siphoning off of the Contingency Fund Money for other uses is probably not in the best interest of the covered workers in Nebraska; that those monies in excess of which are currently used for logical and legitimate purposes by the Department of Labor should be lapsed into the Unemployment Trust Fund to enhance that account to make that account more stable, larger and ensure the benefits to the unemployed worker when that happens. It is important, I believe, that we make every effort, since Nebraska is prohibited by the constitution from borrowing money in the event of the depletion of the Unemployment Trust Fund, that we make every