

the way we've been going around here lately, if you don't get your...take your chance to speak when it comes up, you lose it. We are on the committee amendments and the committee amendments make a bad bill slightly better, so I'll probably vote yes on the committee amendments but certainly will vote no on the bill itself. First of all, the reference to compromise is an interesting one and this probably is a compromise in one sense of the word that members of the...members of the Business and Labor Committee, in their internal deliberations, made some adjustments to...to satisfy a majority of that membership and that makes it a compromise. But do not be deluded into believing that this is a...one of the types of compromises where those individuals affected by the increase are going to feel comfortable with it or will be supportive of it. This is a plan...Senator Hefner correctly indicated that this...I think, that this is an issue that he has been concerned with, gosh, for at least ten years, probably longer than that, I think, before I was in the Legislature I remembered hearing about this proposal that Senator Hefner was pushing and there was a few years ago fairly substantial increase made in the contribution rates paid by negative balance employers. But each year after that, Senator Hefner has continued to bring back this proposal to add more of a burden onto the negative balance employers. The last time, I believe, that this bill was on on the floor it was indefinitely postponed by this body in a fairly convincing fashion. And the reason for that is there is really no impact of this bill other than punitive to a group of businesses that really do not have much of an option. If you're a negative balance...there may be some negative balance employers out there who just do not manage their work force particularly well, granted, I don't know of any of those but there may be. Vast majority of negative balance employers though are those that are affected by seasonal conditions, that when the sun shines they hire lots of employees to get their work done. When the winter winds come in and the snows fall and the work...you can't dig in the ground, you can't pave roads, those individuals are laid off. And that's what the unemployment system is meant for, for those individuals who, through no fault of their own, are not working. And there's nothing about this...nothing about...you can raise this negative balance rate to 30 percent and that's not going to make the ground thaw out so that you can pour cement and keep people busy building roads. It's just not going to happen. If there were fiscal reasons for doing this, it might be different, but there really aren't. I distributed some information from last year from Laureen Van Norman, the legal