

seems like all employers would be covered. And so, getting back to the Bernard-Stevens...Senator Bernard-Stevens' amendment, I would urge you to oppose that and then I would urge you to also oppose the advancement of the bill. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Hefner. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Madam President and members, I reluctantly rise in opposition to the Bernard-Stevens amendment, not because I don't agree with it, I agree with the concept that we should have paid leave. It's valid, it's important. I wish this proposal...what Senator Bernard-Stevens is doing is emphasizing, in a way, how little I'm asking for, how little LB 145 does. It's unpaid leave without any benefits attached to it. And so many businesses, including the State of Nebraska, if you look at it as a business, have so much more than that, yet there are so many businesses that have nothing whatsoever too. And that's the type of business we're trying to address. But, currently, in state policy, you have paid sick leave, you have paid vacation leave, you have comp time and you also currently are provided unpaid leave of six weeks. So when we want to talk about models from the state side to give to the private sector, we already provide far beyond the unpaid leave of six weeks. We also provide all the other types of benefits that are paid beyond that. But we do not provide, Senator Bernard-Stevens is right, we don't provide directly paid parental leave and we should. That should be something we do and there is a cost attached to it. It's uncertain how much there is to the bill. The only difficulty I have with the proposal is how can I go back to my constituents and say the state employees not only have all the benefits they currently have in the unpaid leave and the paid sick leave and paid vacation leave and now in addition pay their parental leave, when there are so many employees without any unpaid family medical leave? And it's that disparity that makes it difficult for me to support the amendment, impossible, in fact, at this point. If we had, in fact, if we could adopt LB 145, if we had across the state unpaid family medical leave, I would see the next step as trying to encourage paid leave. I think that is ultimately something we need to look at and, of course, many businesses provide that and the State of Nebraska, to a degree, provides that. But until we provide a minimum standard, a floor on which the disadvantaged workers of our state have something to stand on, when they have need for leave time to take care of their families, even if it's unpaid leave, at least something to be