

employees, those businesses would be covered. We are talking here about a 100 or more employees, 2 percent of the businesses are all that would be covered. In our bill, we are talking about six weeks of unpaid leave over a two-year period. The federal proposal is for 24 weeks unpaid leave over a two-year proposal. Now let's talk about this. This has got to be taken in context. We have a society that has changed. Demands on families that have changed. It is time policy changed, and if Nebraska doesn't make this proposal, if we don't pass LB 145, other states don't pass legislation like this, you are going to see federal legislation passed. You know the Congress is in support of it. Maybe the President will change his mind. Maybe the President will change who is occupying the office. But we are going to see federal legislation if the states don't take some steps forward to deal with this problem, because the public demands it. It is not just 77 percent of Nebraskans wanting this, it is 75, 80 percent of Americans wanting to see...

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR WESELY: ...this change. I know the business community strongly opposes this. But I would ask you, this issue has been before us for four years. People have talked about, well, let them do it on their own. What evidence do we have that the business community, knowing about this bill and this proposal for four years, what action have we seen to voluntarily take this step? How many businesses have voluntarily adopted this leave policy because they would rather do it voluntarily and try and head off a mandate from the state government? What evidence do we have that the organizations representing the business community have worked to try and see what everybody supports, everybody gets up and supports family medical leave, the only question is do we mandate it or not? Well, how many have taken the voluntary step? What action have we seen in four years of discussing this issue? And I say there is next to no evidence. And I say that it is time this State Legislature recognized that voluntarily we are not going to see this problem solved. It is going to take action, and I'd prefer it at the state level, but if we should not advance this bill, if other states should not take the step, you will see it at the federal level. It is going to happen. It is going to change. Maybe it is not going to be with this bill. Maybe it is not going to be this year, but the time is going to come that family medical leave will be available to all employees across this country and across this state, and I'd rather take the step now, help some individuals,