

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Madam President and members of the body. LB 291 would just merely close a loophole that exists in the current unemployment law. Currently, if someone is discharged for gross misconduct, is disqualified from receiving credits for unemployment benefits up to the time that the misconduct occurred. However, these credits can accumulate between the time of the misconduct and the time the employee is discharged. What LB 291 would do is provide that the employee, should they be discharged, would also become ineligible for unemployment benefits accrued between the time of the misconduct and the time of their discharge. This seemed to me to be reasonable as I certainly don't think that anyone ever intended for a person who is guilty of gross misconduct in the workplace to ever be able to draw unemployment from the time they were committed...from the time they committed these acts, and it certainly does not make sense to allow them to accumulate credits during the gap of time between their actions and their dismissal. This bill is the same as LB 1164, which was introduced by Senator Brad Ashford last year. Last year the bill was advanced from the committee with no opposition and was awaiting debate on General File when the session ended. So I'd hope we could move the bill this year. This bill is not expected to affect only a handful of cases throughout the state, yet I feel it is important that we introduce this bill so we can address this loophole in the law, and I would ask for your support in advancing this bill. And I'll answer any of your questions if I can. Thank you.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Vrtiska. Is there any discussion on the advancement of LB 291? Seeing none, Senator Vrtiska, do you wish to close? Closing is waived. The question before you is the advancement of LB 291. All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Have you all voted? Please record.

CLERK: 25 ayes, 0 nays, Madam President, on the advancement of 291.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: LB 291 advances. Senator Beutler would like to recognize Dr. Les Veskrna of the Lincoln Medical Education Foundation who is serving as the family doctor of the day today on behalf of the Nebraska Academy of Family Physicians. Dr. Veskrna is under the north balcony. Will you please stand and be recognized. LB 699.