

to keep that in there is because we might have a business that might have 110 employees, so what we tried to do with this bill is the Micron bill was passed earlier in the year, that was 250 employees or more, what we're trying to do is fill in a gap here to take care of those businesses between one and five hundred, I mean one and two hundred and fifty. Now the intent again, and intent, I realize, is what you intend to do, not always what you do do, but the intent of the bill is for the smaller employers. So that's the reason for this that we want to keep in this up to 250 employees. And I would like to turn the remaining...my remaining time over to Senator Wickersham.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Senator Wickersham, you have three and a half minutes.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Well, thank you, Madam President. I appreciate what Senator Chambers is doing but I guess I agree with Senator Engel that the amendment that we're proposing properly restricts the fund. Now that isn't to say that you couldn't have more burdensome restrictions and, in part, I have some sympathy for what Senator Chambers says. I think that we do need to find a way to provide these kinds of...this kind of assistance for small businesses. I think that, in fact, the economic development statistics for the State of Nebraska show that small businesses do more for the state than do the large businesses. They employ more people. They create more jobs. They are not perhaps as stable but, over the long haul, they do, in fact, provide more jobs and more stability for the Nebraska economy. So I am more than willing, personally, to seek some sort of assistance and encouragement for them, where I might not have been quite as willing to do that for something like the Micron projects. But, at any rate, there are...you don't want to let anybody fall through the cracks and, as Senator Engel has indicated, if we structure the bill properly, we'll be able to provide for a wide range of employers up to that 250 employee level. And I think that once you get above 100 employees, it's not appropriate to give those folks grants but it is perhaps appropriate to allow low-interest rate loans to them because they can have problems with financing as any other business can. So that's the reason the amendment was structured the way it was. And, Senator Chambers, I don't think that the amendment will allow quite as large a portion of the total fund to be used as you indicated because it would be a maximum of 500,000. If I recall, the request was for \$6 million in the fund but if I am incorrect in that, I will...you can advise me, but \$500,000