

Senator Witek.

SENATOR WITEK: While everyone is here, just in case they didn't hear, this part of the amendment spends \$40,000 and gives it to the Department of Labor to go and do a study and make recommendations on adjusting the minimum wage in Nebraska to account for increases in the cost of living, which means that they will recommend that the cost...or the minimum wage in Nebraska will be increased. We are spending \$40,000 to give to these individuals to put together this study. I think it is a waste of taxpayer money to do something that we shouldn't be doing in the first place, and that's interfering in the marketplace, and trying to legislate what the minimum wage should be here in the State of Nebraska. And I hope people will vote against it. Thank you.

SENATOR LINDSAY: Thank you, Senator Witek. Senator Bohlke, to close on your amendment.

SENATOR BOHLKE: Yes, Mr. Speaker and members, I rise in support of the amendment. I think you've heard a great deal of support on the floor and I think that Senator Wesely has something that he wants to add before we go to a vote. So, Senator Wesely, you may have the balance of my time.

SENATOR WESELY: Just real briefly, Senator Witek talks about not interfering with the marketplace, again, we are trying to identify the marketplace. We are trying to take and analyze where the jobs are, where people are looking for workers, where our workers are in the welfare system. We are trying to match up through a computer system and an analysis through this effort, so that we can do that bridging between the private sector and the public welfare program. This is exactly what we've been talking about. It is welfare reform. We want to work with the businesses that we have in this state, where the jobs are available. They are looking for workers. Through this analysis that we are calling for here, we will know where they are. See, that's the whole problem, we don't have...do you think we have all this just sitting around and we can pull it up and we can do it? We found out we don't have that. You'd think we should. The Labor Department and everybody should have this information, it's not there. If we can sit down and go, now, Omaha, that's where we have got recipients of services, but maybe that's not where the jobs are. Maybe we need to move and try and find ways to make some adjustments so that we can get