

two different drafts of amendments dealing with the minimum wage. This draft before you is one that takes the current minimum wage, which is at \$4.25 an hour, and increases it 25 cents to \$4.50 an hour, a small raise indeed. The original bill that was introduced and is now held in the Business and Labor Committee would have had a 90-cent increase over a two-year period. This is a one-time 25-cent increase. It is a pittance and it is too small a proposal in my view for what we really need to do with wages in the state of Nebraska, but nevertheless it starts us to move forward in a very important way. Senator Brashear talked about how this bill doesn't have to deal with the minimum wage; how it deals with the fact that you have to have \$20,000 income to qualify for benefits under the bill. Well, in my view, it does deal with the minimum wage because this is the latest in a long line of tax break legislation aimed to help economic development but also the corporate community in the state of Nebraska that has been targeted toward the largest, strongest, most prosperous companies in the state in an attempt to set up an economic development theory that's best described as trickle down where you have the largest and strongest provided incentives in the hope that they will then, in turn, create jobs that will...and income that will trickle down to the rest of us in the state of Nebraska. And what I'm here to tell you is that theory has failed in the state of Nebraska to the degree that we had hoped it would. It is true that some jobs have been created in the state of Nebraska under some of the previous legislation. It is true some investment has occurred in the state of Nebraska, but it has not affected the wages of the people of this state, the vast majority of workers in this state, in the way we would have liked to have seen it accomplish that goal, because it wasn't just an attempt to help those directly affected by the tax break legislation. It was to help the whole state of Nebraska by lifting up the economic engine of the larger companies and helping the smaller companies and all the workers involved to enjoy a prosperity that would be shared across the state of Nebraska. And the point I'm trying to make and why it is relevant to this bill and why I want you to see this adopted is that we have to recognize that there is another approach to providing for economic security to the people of this state, to the working people of this state. We've tried the idea of the top-down economic incentives. We have, as I mentioned, passed several bills and I'll go through the history of those, but in the end we continue to have very low wages in the state of Nebraska. One of the handouts that I have for you,