

concern, is that I helped shepherd through the welfare legislation the last two years, introducing it on behalf of the Governor and seeing it passed and working at odds with my colleague, Senator Chambers, and others to try and have a two-year cutoff of the welfare system and, at the time, and I think Senator Chambers will remember and others will remember, I talked about the commitment on the part of myself and the Governor and others supporting the welfare reform that there would be a business round table established and that round table would address the problems with the jobs that we have in the state and the need for better paying work for our citizens who are able to and want to work. And what we found is that, what I thought would happen, what I hoped would happen in terms of addressing the problem of good jobs with good benefits has all been laid aside; that there is next to nothing happening right now, in my view, to address what is a fundamental part of welfare reform. We could talk all we want to about how we need to reduce welfare benefits or provide welfare reform or cut off individuals or whatever you want to discuss on welfare, and I would be happy to debate that with anybody here on the floor or particularly our attorney...our auditor, State Auditor, who has a particularly peculiar view on this. But I think, more than that, everybody's hope is that through welfare reform we give individuals the tools and the incentive to move into the work force and get good paying jobs, and what we're finding is that that's simply not available to too many citizens in the state, that in the past many went on welfare because of the very fact that though they wanted to work, that they were willing to to work, the jobs that were available not only did not pay well but they had no health care or child care benefits. So someone working on minimum wage out there for \$4.25 an hour barely has enough money to even begin to pay the bills of that family and does not then have the ability to pay for the child care and the health care that is so vital to raising a family in this state. So the effort was going to be made. The business community got what they wanted in terms of reductions in welfare and cutoffs in welfare, but the next equation, the next step, got dropped and that's why I'm here and saying that if we can't recognize that the economic market impacts of the tax incentives does not reach down to those who are working across the state of Nebraska in very many jobs, and if welfare reform has not achieved the goal of providing for decent jobs for individuals who want to leave the welfare system, then it's time for this Legislature to recognize the problem and take action on it. So, for those two