

primary reasons, I am here to offer this amendment and suggest that 25 cents is far too little. It is not adequate. It affects, some estimates are, about 6 percent to 10 percent of the workers, so obviously the vast majority of the workers aren't affected, but what it does is, though it raises that bottom rung just slightly, it also has an impact of raising some wages above it. If you're able to raise the lowest ring, you are also then able to have others who are working have a bump up as well in their wages. So my hope is that by starting here this, in this small way just on the minimum wage, we will have a ripple effect that will be positive across the state of Nebraska in addressing the problem of low wages in Nebraska. The figures that I've got, and you can see from the handout, you know that the minimum wage has not been adjusted very much over the years. It's had an increase, since 1979 to 1995, of about 46 percent.

SPEAKER WITHEM: One minute.

SENATOR WESELY: The increase of the consumer price index has more than doubled that, so clearly we have fallen behind in providing adequate income. More so, as the lowest among us have not been able to have adjustments in their minimum wage, we have likewise seen those that are wealthiest among us accumulate increased income and increased wealth, and that's why the juxtaposition of this effort to provide tax breaks to these individuals needs to be brought into mind. When we reach out and help the strongest among us and ignore the need of those who are weakest and poorest among us, we do not have, I think, a fair solution to the problem. You'll see a...some charts and information on that and a cartoon that talks about an individual looking at the tax break menu in a restaurant while outside, looking through the window, is an individual in the snow talking about or interested in the minimum wage. And that's what we've done. We've shut out those...

SPEAKER WITHEM: Time.

SENATOR WESELY: ..in need of higher wages and we need to address that issue as we address the other issues in LB 1368.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Wesely. I would like to pause one second and recognize in the north balcony a guest of Senator Hilgert, 12 fourth graders from Central Christian Church in...excuse me, Central Christian School in Omaha along with