

primarily because of the public policy that's been passed over the last quarter of a century that has created the depopulation, those areas certainly are and can be affected by this legislation because they are in a position where they might not be able to afford to maintain their business because of low population much more than minimum wage. But I would submit other than that particular situation, minimum wage really is not relevant relative to the hiring that goes on in most of our communities and I think that studies or just flat-out discussion with business owners in the communities around the state will indicate that their base certainly is not the minimum wage. In fact, a great deal of them don't even have any minimum wage workers and the...in fact, the starting wage to get qualified people is probably more in the area of \$7.00 and higher than it has any relationship to the minimum wage. So I think that we need to certainly keep this in the context of what our current situation is and I wanted to express some of those comments as we continued the discussion on this particular item and, Mr. President, I would yield the balance of my time to Senator Brashear.

SENATOR LINDSAY PRESIDING

SENATOR LINDSAY: Thank you, Senator Maurstad. Senator Brashear, you have about a minute and a half.

SENATOR BRASHEAR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the body. Thank you, Senator Maurstad. I appreciate the time. The object of the amendment was to demonstrate that we constantly talk about business and business only in relationship to these kinds of policies. I am sincere about the amendment. Yes, I believe that if the state of Nebraska has a minimum wage...

SENATOR LINDSAY: One minute.

SENATOR BRASHEAR: ..that the people who work for the state of Nebraska ought to receive that minimum wage. I deferred on agriculture earlier for the reasons that I stated, but I did want to make it clear, and I was sincere in the effort early in this debate, that we ought not constantly be looking only at the profit-making, free-market engine of our economy--the one that produces the jobs, employs the people, makes the profit, pays the taxes, makes it possible for people to pay taxes and preserve the good life. I think it is not fair that we