

question for Senator Wesely, if he's here.

SENATOR LINDSAY: Senator Wesely, are you here?

SENATOR ENGEL: I think Senator Crosby asked...I couldn't see you over there, Senator Wesely. I'm sorry. I think, yes, Senator Crosby asked a question similar to this, but the question I've had is how many people in the state of Nebraska are actually receiving the minimum wage and of those how many of them are under the age of 19? Do you have...you gave a percentage, but you have some actual numbers. That's what...

SENATOR WESELY: I...

SENATOR ENGEL: I have a reason for asking you.

SENATOR WESELY: Well, currently there's, under the \$5.00 an hour...we don't have figures that show just the minimum wage. We know, like, if they earn less than \$5.00 an hour and it's something like 110,000 Nebraskans that are less than \$5.00 an hour. How many of those are actual minimum wage, I don't know. Like I said, the estimates are 5 to 10 percent and so then you're talking more, I don't know, maybe in the range of 30 or 40 thousand, 50 thousand people possibly.

SENATOR ENGEL: And of that number how many are under the age of 19?

SENATOR WESELY: And the estimates there are...we...the latest figure, the best figure we have is something like 31 percent, but we've seen other figures as low as 15 percent, so somewhere between 15 and 31 percent are teenagers.

SENATOR ENGEL: Of those. Okay, the reason I'm asking that, in our area it's almost impossible to hire anybody at the minimum wage level. Even the McDonald's and so forth up there are paying more than that. And the situation is up there, now, I have hired people at that rate, but the only reason I've hired them, I've got calls from the high school for cooperative education or from Western Iowa Tech where they have students in prelaw or prebusiness and they said, could you, could someone come over and train in your office? I really didn't need them because I have adequate staff who I'm paying quite a bit more than minimum wage, but the only reason I brought them over was