

thirty years, and how much you'd have to work to accomplish the exact same standard of living, whether it be a house or a car. People are working harder, Nebraskans work hard, they're getting paid too little. Our wages in this state are 47th in one figure, 45th in another among all the states. We've got to do something about it. Now there's a number of approaches we can take. This is the least approach we can take. This is the least we can do. Twenty-five cents, as Senator Hilgert said, no, that's not much, it's one quarter an hour. But it can mean the difference to somebody out there struggling to keep their head above water. It's such a pitiful amount, it's such a small amount to ask for those who are trying to work their way out of poverty that I can't believe that we've had the debate that we've had in opposition to it. So I look forward to the vote on this, to see where people really stand on this issue. And, again, the juxtaposition to having this with the...with the other millions of dollars we're talking about, the tax incentives that we have, it seems a small price to pay to ask a business, as we help business, as we provide incentives to business, we ask the business community in turn to provide incentives to those who want to work have a decent wage. Part of the issue that's tied into this is the welfare issue. Senator Crosby talked about how she opposed efforts to reform welfare and she opposes this effort to increase the minimum wage. In a sense, Senator Crosby, you seem to be saying you want to reward welfare more than work. I don't. John Breslow sent us a letter saying he wants to reward work more than welfare. But his idea is to press down those that are on welfare, to reduce their assistance rather than raising the wages of those who work. That's the wrong approach. I agree with the idea that we should reward work more than welfare. I understand that. Those who are working should have decent wages and benefits. But the way to reward work is to increase the wages, not to take those who are poor and take from them the pittance they now get and make it even harder, bringing misery to more individuals. I don't think the solution to the imbalance that we have is to push people down. I think what we need to do is lift people up. We need to understand that taking the minimum wage and raising it up not only helps those on minimum wage, not only...

SENATOR LINDSAY: One minute.

SENATOR WESELY: ...helps those who are on welfare trying to get