

effort to exempt, on the national level, through the flat tax on earned income, so individuals that have investments, live off investments, aren't actually working for a living, well, those folks shouldn't have to pay any income. No, huh-uh, they're the economic engine that this state and that this country thrives upon. But the rest of us that we have to work for a living, have to go out day in and day out and do the kind of jobs that are not easy to do and get paid a very little wage for what we do do, no, we have to pay tax. That's something that's our responsibility. Some of the information I passed out...

SENATOR LINDSAY: One minute.

SENATOR WESELY: ...will show you that the highest income of us, over the course of the last 15 years, have seen a reduction overall in the taxes that they pay, very poorest among us, likewise, have had a slight reduction. But in the middle, where most of us, in the middle we're paying more. So in the middle where our wages have not kept up with inflation, where we're not able to earn as much as we once did relative to inflation, we're paying more taxes. That's why it's one of the reasons it's so hard to keep...for people to keep their head above water. And if that's class warfare to come back here and say that that's not fair, that those who are the richest and wealthiest among us should be able to pay more, and that those that are working out there in the middle class shouldn't have to pay as much, well then so be it. But it's not an effort initiated from my front and others who share my philosophy, it's in response to these sort of bills that come forward and constantly expand the exemptions and breaks that we provide and do not include those who are in the middle or those in the low end of the scale in our society. Thank you.

SENATOR LINDSAY: Thank you, Senator Wesely. Senator Chambers, followed by Senators Jensen, Schimek, and Brashear.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the Legislature. Senator Brashear has intrigued me with this talk about the merger, and I want to pursue that a little bit, if I may, in order that I might learn something. Most of what I know about working on the railroad comes from my reading about Frank James and Jessie. Senator Brashear, and you know Jessie was...he used to rob banks, and Frank stuck up the railroad, and I've said...I've told you this before, Mrs. James, when she was