

feel like a weather forecaster saying there is a hurricane coming, there is a hurricane coming, and people aren't paying any attention. And when it hits, and it is already hitting, there is going to be some real damage. We are talking a billion dollars, if we stopped right now and just finished out the contracts we have in place, a billion dollars we've got ourselves obligated for. That's real money, and that's costing us in terms of our revenues to be able to meet the needs of the state. So, again, the 20,000 average doesn't do anything. This amendment is drafted to accomplish something. It's goal is to make sure that we really do take the limited resources, we only have so much money to spend on the vast amount of needs in this state, and on the tax break side of things, let's try and bring in the best job, not just any job, which is currently under 775, if you got a job, that's it. It gets the credit. Now, you know, there is a percent off that, so there is some...but, nevertheless, it doesn't say any minimum and we need to take a step to do that. Also, I want to reemphasize we have health care in here. As Chair of the Health Committee, I've worked very hard to try and get health insurance coverage and I think that would be a step we need to take as well. We have to try everywhere we can to try and provide incentives for people to have health insurance. Now I am bringing this issue to you, we brought it before on the minimum wage with 25 cents. You rejected that. You could not even go the 25 cent increase in minimum wage. I don't know that we have very many votes at all for this amendment. I expect it not to succeed, obviously, but the question I ask you, when you go back to your districts after the session and your constituents talk about their concerns and their interests, I am sure you are going to hear questions about the ability to meet the family needs that they have, about their concerns about the future, about the economy. We are hearing it across the country. We are going to hear it here in Nebraska as well, but I think I've raised an issue of importance that we have not spent time on in this Legislature before. That is the question of wages in this state. We have shown you figures from various studies. They all come to the same conclusion, we are between 45th and 47th in the wages we pay our workers in the state of Nebraska. Now what are we going to do about it? If you don't want to raise the minimum wage, I am disappointed. If you don't want to do this in terms of the tax breaks, I am disappointed, but then what are you going to propose? Are you just going to ignore the issue? Are you just going to say, that's fine, I am satisfied, 45th to 47th on wages, that's okay