

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

January 8, 2003

state claims process. We now receive more information on claims than we've ever done before. And the Legislature has a better handle on those claims when we address them here on the floor. Now, because of the committee's investigation into claims, we have a bill that we'll introduce to look at the oversight of the administrative license revocations for drunken driving. So we're just one bill away from fixing that problem. We've accomplished a great deal, but there's more to do. We now have the responsibility of fixing the workers' compensation law as it relates to the exemption for agricultural workers, as we had a Supreme Court ruling last summer. We need to address that. We need to approve the correct distribution of \$45 million from the federal government to go to unemployment insurance system, and while keeping in mind that the unemployment tax is going to be rising. It's going to be tough on our business owners in the state. These are significant matters concerning business and employees, and the list is growing. We're on the cnsset of changing the way workers' compensation law is dealt with. We haven't done that since 1993. The times have changed, the economy has changed, we have different types of workers now, so the law needs to evolve also. It's vital that now more than ever this committee stands dedicated and focused on the tasks at hand. It's vital that all affected parties feel that they have a voice and that they have a place at the table. We need an energetic, effective committee to deal with these challenges. As Chair, you know I've asked the tough questions, and I've made sure that all the best information is at hand so that you have it here on the floor when the bills come to you. My record shows that I've done that. I can assure you that I'll continue to do that as the Chair of the Business and Labor Committee. Over the last two years, this committee has operated with dedication and vitality and energy and eagerness in addressing the problems that face business and labor. And I ask for your vote so that we maintain that kind of leadership. Thank you.

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN: Thank you, Senator Connealy. Chair recognizes Senator Vrtiska.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. I respectfully ask for your vote for the Chair of the Business and Labor Committee. As many of you know, I had served as the