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FLOOR DEBATE

February 21, 2003 LB 308, 418

millions of dollars in tax incentives to create jobs in which to defend the workers, themselves, we have to create a special state program. This is where the left hand should know what the right hand is doing, and we act as if we don't. We do have some measures over in the Revenue Committee that in fact speak to this issue. I don't know whether they'll come out or not. I will tell you this. The existence of LB 418, the existence of worker bills of right emanating from a specific industry that has abused its workers, seems to me exactly the prima facie evidence that says tax incentives should not be given to such an industry that can't meet the basic standards of good corporate citizenship, which I think are failing in this area. Thank you.

SENATOR JANSSEN: Thank you, Senator Landis. Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Mr. President, I do have amendments from the Business and Labor Committee. This is AM0224.

SENATOR JANSSEN: Senator Vrtiska, Chairman of the Business and Labor Committee, to open on the committee amendments.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Senator Janssen. Business and Labor Committee heard LB 418 and LB 308 jointly on February 3. LB 418 simply proposed eliminating the 2004 termination date attached to the statute creating the position of Meatpacking Industry Worker Rights Coordinator. It was introduced as part of the Governor's budget package as a cost savings by combining the two positions in the Department of Labor. The meatpacking and the coordinator and the position under the Non-English-Speaking Workers Rights Protection Act. Under LB 418, the department has said the change would be done administratively. LB 308 proposes that this action be put in statute. By combining the statutes that created the Non-English-Speaking Workers Protection Act and the Meatpacking Industry Worker Rights Coordinator and deleting the termination date of June 30, 2004, we can assure the protection of the functions performed through these positions from possible budget cuts. We have learned the Worker Rights Coordinator position that was created in response to public concern about the treatment of some workers in our meatpacking plants has done a great deal of work for the employers and employees of those