

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

March 25, 2003 LB 608

our viewers, would you please review it a minute or two?

SENATOR LANDIS: Thank you, Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature. This amendment has to do with whether or not we're going to ask a minimum wage level from LB 775 companies. The committee was faced with three or four different suggestions on appropriate amounts. We compared it to surrounding states. We compared it to what we thought was a legitimate standard. And we reported out this amendment that says, \$8.70 an hour if you've got health insurance, or \$9.57 an hour with no health benefits. Since then, Senator Pederson has offered the following amendment. I believe Senator Pederson's is both 160 and 140 percent of the federal minimum wage. And we're in the middle of a knock-down, drag-out fight on the Pederson amendment. Thank you, Senator Cudaback.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Landis. Senator Pederson, would you like to brief us on your amendment before we get started with discussion? (AM0883, Legislative Journal page 959.)

SENATOR D. PEDERSON: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. Following up on what Senator Landis says, are we ready to rumble? Here we go. This amendment that I have now seeks to set forth a minimum requirement that does two things. First, it recognizes that the less populated parts of our state generally have a lower wage scale than the larger areas. The committee proposal is geared towards a one-size-fits-all in regard to wages. Secondly, the amendment is based upon federal wage rather than the state average. Now, currently, we have no wage requirement for LB 775, and we have never had one since this bill was instituted in 1987. The Revenue Committee believes that we need a scale, and I am willing to recognize that desire. But I would like to consider the modification of the committee amendment in this regard. In the real world, it works like this. If a company wants to set up a business, it must meet or, in all likelihood, substantially exceed the usual wage in the area. If it doesn't offer a better package of compensation, where is it going to get its employees? Now, I know that at least three proposals were turned down in the North Platte area for possible location there because they did not offer to bring