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FLOOR DEBATE

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SENATOR SCHIMEK: One minute.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: ...work all day with a song in their heart because they get paid less than other people in other parts of the state. That kind of argument that is being given here should make us all ashamed. It should make us embarrassed. We are not an adjunct to the business community. We are the upholders of the rights and interests of the citizens of this state. The workers should be able to look to us to get something in the way of fair treatment, and to do anything less than what is offered by this amendment is doubly unfair. I don't think the amendment goes far enough, but we will take what we can get and this is a step in the right direction. Thank you, Madam President.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you, Senator Chambers. The Chair recognizes Senator Bourne, to be followed by Senators Beutler, Cudaback, Brashear, Hartnett, and Baker.

SENATOR BOURNE: Thank you, Madam President. Members of the Legislature, to be quite honest, I didn't participate in the debate regarding the wages because I don't know what the answer is. We're looking at how to "incent" people to start businesses here and maintain them, and it seems to me that, as it relates to rural Nebraska, we're doing a poor job of "incenting" people to locate there with no minimum wage requirement. So if we had a minimum wage requirement, I don't see how we're going to be better off, but that remains to be seen. The reason that I wanted to talk for a minute is I wanted to talk about the provisions in the floor amendment that relate to health insurance. And I know that we adopted an amendment from Senator Bromm last week that needs some work, according to Senator Bromm, and I also think that this insurance provision is going to require some work as well, and I want Senator Landis to listen. And we did discuss this in Executive Session and he's even acknowledged that there's some ambiguities here that need some work. I'm concerned about several things. What is an average plan? Does that mean all plans, pension plans, ERISA plans? Talks about what insurance is, and there's different forms of insurance. There's MEWAs, things of that nature. Then down lower, in line 19 of the amendment, it talks about for