

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

April 1, 2003 LB 210

SENATOR BEUTLER: ...dangerous occupation. There is no factual basis for the farm and ranch labor worker compensation exemption, and it should be repealed. It should be repealed. That's what this amendment does. While closing the loophole might raise insurance costs for some agricultural operations, it would also provide an important measure of financial protection to workers who are obviously in need of it. Not only would it...I would add, not only would it add financial protection to workers, but by virtue of being under workers' compensation, it also adds financial protection to the employer, because he cannot be sued for any and all damages. The only damages that you pay are those covered by your insurance, which are limited as to nature and scope. That's part of the trade-off in workers' compensation. You get the protection...

SENATOR CUDABACK: Time.

SENATOR BEUTLER: ...of limits, and other procedural matters. And I'll go on about that. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Beutler. You've heard the opening on AM1113, which is to the Business and Labor Committee amendment, AM0926. Open for discussion. Senator Bromm.

SPEAKER BROMM: I rise, Mr. President, to oppose Senator Beutler's amendment. As I interpret the amendment, it strikes completely the agricultural exemption. And that would be going much, much further than most of the states around us, or that are similarly situated with the kind of agricultural operation that we have in this state. I certainly wouldn't fault Senator Beutler for bringing a bill to do this. But we worked on this bill for two years. And it's been out there, the subject has been out there. We've worked with definitions, we've worked with a number of different people. And I appreciate the discussion and the thought process. But I would say that it's a radical departure from the work product that we've got before us now. And if you're going to repeal the agricultural exemption altogether, you better know what the insurance market and cost is out there, and what it's going to do to the agricultural economy in this state. Because if you're out there at risk with one employee, and that employee has an accident, and you may be