

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

April 15, 2003      LB 435

to those people. So they're not all kids. They're mostly adults, many of them elderly. Secondly, with respect to kids, Senator Foley pointed out that with regard to college kids, why should they be paid less? They're doing the work. They may be doing the work better than most adults would do it. Why should they be paid less? Secondly, the tuition point that Senator Foley made is very, very relevant. And going a step further, what he didn't mention is that tuition is tripling in Nebraska, is going up...not tripling, is going up 10 percent a year, I think, for the last two years, and it will go at least another 10 percent this next year because of our budget. Student debt is increasing tremendously in America. It's almost beginning to be the case that you don't get out of college without significant debt. And part of the reason for that is they can't make decent wages when they work, even if they do work. Secondly, 40 percent of people...of young people, of kids, who make a minimum wage come from low-income families, and they're trying to help out their families, in part. Forty percent of them are from low-income families. And finally, keep in mind,...I don't know how it was in your county, but in Lancaster County a very high percentage of births in Lancaster County...I think it's up 40 percent now...are to single women. A great many of those are teenage women. So some of these kids, many of these kids, are going to have to go to work to support children. They're single wage earners. These aren't just happy-go-lucky high school kids that have to...that will spend the money buying a car or a cassette player or whatever. You make light of the problem when you say those kinds of things. I don't know how we get out of the downward spiral, economic situation we're in in Nebraska, but I don't think you do it by suppressing wages. When you suppress wages, when wages go down, the workers...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR BEUTLER: ...flee. When the workers flee, you have no worker pool. When you have no worker pool, you can't attract business. So, on the one hand, you may make it easy for some businesses, but the consequence of doing that is you have no worker pool. You have nothing to attract new industry to your area. They're all gone. They're not going to stick around in agriculture for subminimum wage wages. So it seems to me...and