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FLOOR DEBATE

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government to pay money out of my pocket. Regardless of how good those services were, that specifically takes money out of my pocket to pay for the things that Senator Schimek talked about. The fact that I have a mortgage to pay for, the fact that my natural gas costs have increased, the fact that my insurance costs have gone up, so I think there's some honesty on the side of trying to push for a higher wage. But I think the question is, is that the effective way to do it? I've got people in my district, I've got a county in my district that is one of the poorest counties in the nation, and I drive into that county and those people own what they have. They work on the same farm that their parents worked for, and I think the average per capita income in that county is \$10,000 a person. And why is that? Is it because the people there aren't paying them a fair wage? No, it's because the people there are paying for a lot of other things besides the actual income, but the reality is, is that in some parts of the state there's limited resources. There's limited opportunities, and the reality is, is that you could force some people from different parts of the state to relocate to other parts of the state and eliminate opportunities for employment altogether. So I think the discussion has been interesting from my perspective. I think if you look at the reality, people at the bottom of the ladder are doing it. Senator Schimek said that if you're having problems managing your household budget, imagine how the people at the bottom of the ladder are doing it. They're doing it. They're going to continue to do it. Senator Cunningham has alluded to the fact that they might have to do it with less, based on what we all have to decide here in the next month and a half about the state's finances. And I'm not totally convinced that this is going to solve that problem, but I continue to listen. I think it's interesting.

**SPEAKER BROMM PRESIDING**

**SPEAKER BROMM:** One minute.

**SENATOR ERDMAN:** But I think it is difficult. Obviously, if we would sit down and probably compare financial statements to members of the body, we would find ourselves in a lot of different positions. Like Senator Chambers pointed out, that's