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 LR 67

will affect very few business owners, according to what I'm hearing here today. And don't think I don't have some sympathy for Senator Cunningham and Senator Janssen. And, Senator Janssen, it makes me heartsick sometimes to think about the small communities, I grew up in one, and the boarded up storefronts; and the banks that are national in origin, for instance, moving into these small towns who don't, in some cases, not all cases but in some cases, really don't care about the community that much; these big mega stores that are moving in on the outskirts of communities or nearby communities and taking businesses from all those little retail stores and convenient...and grocery stores in their neighborhoods or nearby. It is very sad to me, but I don't think that we can stop that, nor do I know how to stop that. I don't think it's because we're paying a decent wage. I don't think this is an unfunded mandate, Senator Mines. We've been doing minimum wage since I believe, Senator Beutler, the thirties maybe? How long have we been doing minimum wages? I don't really remember, but we've always had minimum wage in this country since I've been on this planet. So I would just ask you to think about the people in your communities and the fact that many of them are really struggling to make ends meet. I don't know if any of you saw the call-in poll last night on channel 10 and 11, but the question was, do you think the minimum wage should be raised, and 81 percent of the call-in voters said yes. There are people in your communities who believe that minimum wage should be raised; it's way past time. Think about those people in your communities also. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I release the rest of my time to the Chair.

SPEAKER BROMM: Thank you, Senator Schimek. (Visitors introduced.) And while the Legislature is in session and capable of transacting business, I propose to sign and do sign LR 67. The next speaker is Senator Schimek. Senator Schimek waives off. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Bromm, members of the Legislature, I just want to talk a little bit about the widening gulf between the lower fifth of the population and the highest fifth of the population that started in the 1980s and has continued through the 1990s, and that gulf is becoming very significant. The