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SENATOR CUNNINGHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members. Senator Tyson talked earlier about statistics and I've got some statistics and I don't know if they're accurate or not. I don't know if some of the other things we've heard are accurate or not. But, admittedly, these are national statistics and they were taken five years ago. But from these statistics, it says that 40 percent of people that are on minimum wage get a raise within 4 months, and 63 percent of those are earning 20 percent more within 12 months. It also, the statistics, showed that in 1996 the predictions were, if Congress would have raised the minimum wage at that point, 128,000 jobs for beginning wage earners would have been lost. Now then I'd like to address a couple things Senator Chambers said. You know, Senator Chambers, I don't know how you can say that businesses haven't closed because of minimum wage increases, and maybe by the same point I can't say they have, but I believe they have and you believe they haven't, but it's one more thing that's added to those...the cost of those businesses and they have closed. You go through rural Nebraska and those main streets are becoming barren. So I would take opposition with you on that. And both you and Senator Schimek, you talked about, why are we opposed if it's only affecting so few businesses? Well, we've said it time and time again on this floor, it affects more than a few businesses. It affects all businesses. Every business out there is going to have to raise their rates of pay, every single one of them, and I happen to firmly believe that we can do more for our employers by staying healthy as businesses rather than being broke. We can do more. We can offer more wages. We can offer more benefits. We can offer the insurance and profit sharing. And I'd like to go through what I talked about earlier. I'm sure most of you heard this, but if you didn't, in my little store, 15,200 hours we work a week, 15,200 hours...or, pardon me, a year. If you increase minimum wage by \$1, and that's not exactly what we're talking about here, but if it were \$1, that's a minimum of \$15,000 a year it would cost a little grocery store in a town of 600 people. Now you tell me where you just come up with \$15,000 a year. But it's more than \$15,000 a year because you raise the rates of pay percentagewise of the increase that's given to the minimum wage worker. I told you that I give profit sharing for my employees, and I give