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there's no evidence of any correlation between inflation and the increase in the minimum wage. We know there's no evidence in Nebraska of any correlation between increased unemployment and increasing the minimum wage. Notwithstanding certain pieces of anecdotal information, there is no evidence that it puts any businesses out of business. There's no study showing that. You know, there's only one thing that we know for sure. The one thing we know for sure is that the purchasing power of the minimum wage is eroding this year, last year, the year before, and the three years before that; that the 18 to 25 thousand Nebraskans who are there at the minimum wage level, some of them for many years, by the way...there are other studies that show that there are people who are on the minimum wage or close to it for a large number of years, which stands to reason. We all aren't born super intelligent. We all weren't born with all of God's gifts, but I'm hoping that God gave the compassion to all the rest of us to recognize that we might have been born without those gifts and, to the extent that somebody is worth 40 hours of work and is working for us for 40 hours, we might compensate them enough to keep them out of poverty and to keep their kids out of poverty and their families out of poverty. We know they're below poverty. We know they can't support their kids. We recognize that by instituting government programs to help support them. But why should we be making government bigger when, if we paid them right, they could support themselves and they could have a little dignity? They could say, I'm a self-sufficient person. Self-reliance, American...good old American self-reliance, that's what we want for everybody, and we don't give them the opportunity to feel that way. Why not? Why shouldn't they have that piece of dignity, to be able to say, I work, I take care of myself, I take care of my family, I don't have to go for any government handouts? We know we're causing more and more people to be in that circumstance. That's what we know. Thank you.

SPEAKER BROMM: Thank you, Senator Beutler. Senator Combs.

SENATOR COMBS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Fellow members of the Legislature, I was just trying to do some figuring here of what the actual impact might be financially for a wage earner in total dollars, and I was just wondering if Senator Beutler or