

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

April 15, 2003 LB 435

in favor of the Redfield amendment to the amendment. I'd also like to share some information with you. I'm sure that not all of you have taken the opportunity to read what Senator Beutler has passed out, although we've all been referring to this Bureau of Business Research pamphlet that's called "Business in Nebraska." And it talks about bridging the gap in these cases where people are getting these low wages. And it says that nationally, nearly half of all female-headed households do receive child support or alimony proposals...or payments, and that does help bridge that gap to some. But unfortunately, they're not regular, and so people can't count on them, so it always...it can't be counted. And it goes on to talk about other kinds of programs that people who are female heads of households have to rely on, and these are, of course, food stamps, Medicaid, public housing and rental assistance, subsidized childcare, and heating assistance to help these families meet their basic needs. And I think that we have to think about that. What we don't pay people in living wages, we, as taxpayers, eventually end up picking up the tab anyway, in some form or another. And there are several other things they mention in here, but what I'd like to finish with is their conclusion, the concluding paragraph of this. And it says, "Despite strong growth in the state's economy and the creation of many new jobs over the last decade, there is a strong indication that wages in Nebraska, overall, are falling short of what is needed for self-sufficiency at the most basic level. If the success of welfare reform efforts depends in large part on the ability of individuals and families to earn liveable wages, these findings suggest that Nebraska policymakers may have to wrestle more with the issue of job quality (e.g., wage levels) than job quantity, in the future. A future study will attempt to identify which industries provide liveable wage opportunities and the competitive position of those industries in the region." And I'm reading from a pamphlet that's...that was put out in the year 2000. So there may be, probably is, a sequel to this particular one, this what we have in our hands. I thought that was very interesting. And I remember...

SPEAKER BROMM: One minute.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: ...on the floor when we discussed welfare