

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 608

Bromm AM2005. I will, Mr. Clerk. Just a minute, Senator Beutler. Senator Beutler to open.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Could I have an aside with the Clerk a minute, Mr. Speaker?

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Beutler, you may continue to open.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, this is a version of the wage amendment. I had proposed to you what was in the committee amendment before and I am hopeful that maybe something somewhat less than that would be agreeable to you in terms of a minimum wage for LB 775. The wage I'm suggesting is \$8.60 an hour. There have been several studies done with respect to minimum wages and livable wages and trying to assess what it takes for a worker in Nebraska to have money enough, basically, to live at a minimal level and to take care of a kid or two, and to not have to rely upon government programs. I know you've heard me say this before, but I just think it's a great shame that we force people to go onto government programs; that we ought to be paying them enough. I mean, and this is just not with incentive programs. I think most of you know if I had my way the minimum wage generally would be considerably higher and then we could better control government expenses. But in any event, there have been a number of studies done, different types of studies by different groups, over what it takes to live in Nebraska. And the federal minimum wage, which I think you will recall from our discussion earlier this year, hasn't been changed in six years so inflation tends to erode its purchasing power. And the Congress, to my knowledge, has taken no action even yet so far this year to bolster or increase the minimum wage, so the overall effect of that is that the whole bottom part of our wage scale is being undermined and people at that end of the wage scale, the closer they are to the end of it, the more it's being undermined, and that's been happening at the same time that things have been good for people at the other end, generally speaking, in the country. And in particular now, as I discussed with you earlier, dividends for owners of corporations are...will no longer be taxed, at least for a period of years, and things will get even better for management, who usually happens to own, as