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SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Vrtiska. Senator Beutler, on the Schimek amendment.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature, the more I think about it, the more I'm in favor of Senator Louden's amendment, that it's an excellent amendment. You know, some people are bothered by the fact that these are periodic Social Security payments that are coming in every month. But just the fact that it's coming in every month doesn't have anything to do with the issue. I mean, think about the fact that these military disability payments, they're coming in every month, but they're not discounted...or taken into account. Take a...take...some people have stock dividends that come in every month, but they're not forced to discount those, as far as Social...as far as these payments are concerned. The fact of the matter is, this thing is not means tested. You don't have to count any of your assets. The idea is to get you through to the next job, not to reduce all your assets to nothing before you move...before you...in case you don't get a job relatively soon. So we should treat like things alike. Social Security should be treated like a disability benefit, like a stock dividend, like any other assets you have, and we should not be trying to decrease these payments because that exists. Now, let me say one thing generally about the bill, and we haven't talked about this very much. But you know and I know that you can't look at a part of a system out of context, that over history and time a balancing act goes on--in this case, labor on one side, management on the other. And back in the 1980s, we used to try to get the weekly amount, the weekly amount of these payments up. But people would say, no, you can't do that because in Nebraska, yeah, the payments aren't very high, but we have an extended benefit period. We do a little better than other states on this aspect of the system, so we shouldn't raise the compensation level. Do you know what the weekly compensation level is in Nebraska, compared to other states? I went back and asked John. I thought it was like thirty-seventh or thirty-eighth. I knew we didn't pay much compared to other states in this particular program. But you know what it is? Forty-sixth or forty-seventh. We are at the bottom of the heap in terms of what we allow people when they're out of work. And that's part of the trade-off, and that's why we shouldn't be