

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

February 24, 2004 LB 1049

this bill.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Yes.

SENATOR BROWN: And yet the...what we're talking about is unemployment benefits. Do you know what the definition of benefit is?

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Well, it would have differing definitions. But in a political sense, it's something that goes to those who are strong enough to have their will acted on by the Legislature. Something of value.

SENATOR BROWN: And so that any time that we adjust that, it is a punishment?

SENATOR CHAMBERS: It all depends on which way the adjustment is going. If it's going to deprive somebody who is in poor circumstances of something that they currently have, it is a punishment, no matter how it is designated by the one doing the depriving, in my opinion.

SENATOR BROWN: What about...there have been circumstances, during long periods of high unemployment, where the federal government has extended the benefits. If the system doesn't have enough money to be able to accommodate that, they're probably less likely to extend those benefits. And yet, in my opinion, it's clear that the true punishment is to individuals who have been long-term unemployed. If we have a system that pays out to people who have made it sort of on their own choice or because of their own action, and deprives people who are long-term, don't you think the punishment is really to the individuals who have been long-term unemployed, rather than to those individuals who have made the choice themselves by their actions or their option?

SENATOR CHAMBERS: You pose a very complex, convoluted question. But I will say this, by way of a short answer. It does not have to be either/or. If we were looking at the federal government, and we can see the amount of pork they...