

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

February 24, 2004 LB 1049

that perhaps I could share with you this morning. And I just want to read some of this stuff to you, because I think it's really relevant, as it relates to the economic benefits of the under insure...or excuse me, the unemployment program. Unemployment insurance is our nation's first line of economic defense in a recession. The program has been around since the mid-1930s, and it has kept unemployed workers attached to the labor force and out of poverty while they search for new work. And to me, out of poverty means we keep them off the food stamp rolls, off the Medicaid rolls here in our state. And you all know how the costs are growing in the Medicaid program. The system is designed to benefit workers, their families, children, their communities, and the economy. Unemployment insurance is designed to pay weekly benefits to laid off individuals so that unemployed workers and their families can maintain essential family spending. Senator Cunningham somehow makes it sound like this is money that's just going right into their pockets, into their savings account, or under their mattress. That's absolutely inaccurate. In addition, by using accumulated payroll taxes from trust funds, unemployment insurance automatically boosts our economy by maintaining consumer spending during a recession. Unemployment insurance automatically boosts our economy by maintaining consumer spending during a recession. Earlier on General File, I talked about, how come the bankers weren't in here to testify in opposition to this bill? Imagine what's going to happen if we extend these benefits out. People are going to default on their car loans, they're going to default on their bank loans. Unemployment insurance boosts our economy by maintaining consumer spending. We've been in a recession here in Nebraska for I don't know how long, at least two years, and we're still feeling the effects of it. The economic benefits of unemployment insurance are widely acknowledged by economists. There are economic benefits as a result of the unemployment insurance program. However, these benefits are not understood or discussed enough by the business community or the general public. For this reason, under...UI programs are too often discussed in legislatures or in the media solely as a cost to business. This one-sided business climate approach is like analyzing a stock's value by only looking at corporate expenses and not considering income. When Senator Cunningham talks about