

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

March 24, 2004 LB 1049

at this for a few weeks, since the last time we discussed it--you're talking about a couple hundred dollars. These aren't people that are socking this money away, that are saving to buy a new Cadillac. These are people that are simply trying to keep some food on the table, trying to keep a roof over their heads while they find a new job in a very employee-unfriendly environment today. There are millions of people nationwide that are looking for work. We are in a recession. And I don't care what anybody says, whether we're coming out of it, or going into it, this is an economic downturn that a lot of people haven't seen before. The unemployment rolls are...I think it's 7 or 8 percent nationwide; I think Nebraska is, I don't know, 4 or 5 percent. And that's people that stop looking for a job. So Senator Cunningham is right. In a vacuum, the person who chastised an employee...or a patient, or a...I don't know what it was, inpatient at the facility, or somebody who touches somebody inappropriately, they should be punished. But I'm not sure their family should, and that's what this does. It keeps a roof over heads till this person finds a new job. I don't see this as a reward in any fashion. I see it as way to keep people off Medicaid. Would Senator Louden yield to a question or two?

SENATOR CUDABACK: Would you yield, Senator Louden?

SENATOR LOUDEN: Yes, I would.

SENATOR BOURNE: Thank you, Senator Louden. I heard you talk about the seniors, and you're looking out for them. How do you distinguish between an individual who is receiving Social Security benefits, and, say, one of the individuals that Senator Cunningham talked about, that has a couple kids, that can't find another job? I mean, shouldn't they...should the senior be more inclined to get unemployment insurance than the...who has some income, than a working-age person who has a couple kids?

SENATOR LOUDEN: Well, I...yeah, I don't think that's the same question. I mean, everybody is entitled to it equally, to the unemployment insurance. If you're eligible, you're eligible, simple as that. If it's been paid in for you, then you're eligible, whether you have kids or whether you're on Social Security.