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SENATOR McDONALD: Mr. President and members of the body, I'd like to ask Senator Mines a question, please.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Mines, would you respond to a question?

SENATOR MINES: Yes, I will.

SENATOR McDONALD: And since this was enacted in 1997, do you know how much money has been utilized by this program?

SENATOR MINES: Without doing the math in my head, the annual allocation, just from our General Fund, is \$247,000. There's also money...a more significant amount of money comes from the private sector, investment by private industry into the fund, and those monies as well are allocated out. So I'm sorry, I don't know.

SENATOR McDONALD: Well, that's quite all right. So by loosening up the requirements, we will have a greater opportunity to utilize this money in rural Nebraska. Is that correct?

SENATOR MINES: Yeah, that's correct. By extending the amount to \$35,000 will allow loans, obviously, of a larger size, and that isn't going to cut down on the number of loans. The microenterprise groups will attract more monies from outside to increase what they do.

SENATOR McDONALD: Thank you, Senator Mines. And I also do support this concept. Many times in rural Nebraska, we're not looking for a big smokestack. We want small opportunities, and this will allow us to have that economic development. On a personal note, I would like to let you know that we received an e-mail from Carson Rogers' daughter this morning, and Carson Rogers was a senator from Ord, from my district, and he is in the hospital in Kearney and recovering as we are speaking, but has a long ways to go. So his friends and colleagues that were here when he was here, I'm certainly...he would certainly be glad to hear from you. So if you'd like some more information