

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

April 5, 2005

LB 709

whole deterioration of the minimum wage causes the deterioration of the lower part of the wage scale; and when the lower part of the wage scale deteriorates, more and more people can't afford the insurance that their employers can't afford to give them. So we build one problem on another, and one government policy after another is exacerbating this problem. Why aren't we doing anything about the minimum wage? Because we want to wait for the federal government again? Are we going to wait for the federal government while the whole lower half of our society deteriorates in a serious manner? Maybe we need to have, as part of this study, a study of the effect of the minimum wage on low-income workers' ability to fund health insurance so they don't need Medicaid. Another item is the whole business of increased business incentives. Before 1990, we were paying \$120 million a year less for business incentives, which meant we had more money for K-12 education, we had more money for university education and the state colleges and the community colleges. Now we're going into another competitive round of that cycle and increasing that \$120 million a year to maybe \$150 million or \$160 million a year. That takes more revenue out of the revenue streams, means that much less money for education, for everything else, and including it prevents us from keeping up with the Medicaid problem. And what is the solution to that? I mean, we need to talk about this a little bit. How many of these cycles do we go through before we're completely busted and have nothing to spend for anything except business incentives? Where does it stop? I mean that's what somebody needs to explain to me. Where does it stop? And I tell you, the power to make it stop is in the United States Congress and they sit on their thumbs and do nothing as we spin out of control with one business incentive after another. Where is free enterprise? Where's that Adam Smith attitude that said businesses exist on the basis of business factors and economic factors, and not on the basis of which government pays them the more? Adam Smith would be appalled today if he saw the level at which government determines where business locates and what happens...

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: One minute.

SENATOR BEUTLER: ...with business. And no one can tell you...I