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LB 312

SENATOR COMBS: Thank you, Madam President and members of the body. I'm just reading through a lot of information that I've received today, and trying to look at what kind of a deal are we getting here? And I've been back talking with Senators Raikes and Landis. Particularly interesting is the sheet that Senator Beutler has distributed, which talks about business tax incentives expenditure budgeting project. And I just was trying to correlate that with what kind of growth have we actually seen in Nebraska, and what kind of bang for the buck are we getting? And I know that when I was campaigning, I discussed a lot about LB 775, that it would be a great idea to get some disclosure. And we're moving that direction with this, and I think that's a real positive move. Because when you are giving something and not telling what that person that's giving you the benefit is getting back in return, it's kind of like going to a board of directors and saying, hey, we need 8 million bucks to do this job, and the board says, okay. So, you know, you give them the \$8 million, and then what do they do with that? And the board never hears. And then the next year, without a report, you're asked to give another \$8 million for similar good work. So I like that provision in here, where we now are going to have new disclosure requirements with project-specific credits earned and used. So I think that's good. And I think it's regionally that that's going to be done. Another positive I see is that the credits are being given to encourage higher wages. In other words, there's a provision in there to reward higher-paying jobs, which I know has been a complaint of the old system, was that, yeah, you created jobs, but they are not a living wage. So I think this is another positive aspect. Another one that I've noticed here is, companies can qualify for credits at a lower level, in other words, if you create two jobs and \$125,000 of new investment in counties with less than 15,000 people, which, that's a real...it's not labeled a rural incentive, but that kind of perked my ears up, because that applies to my district; and if they create five jobs and a \$250,000 investment in counties with a 25,000 population, which, again, will pick up more communities. So these are some things, in just glancing over the bill, I look, that seem very interesting to me. I'm still listening to the debate. I don't want to bracket the bill. I think this is a positive step forward, certainly better than LB 775. And a fourth thing is the research and