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LB 312

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: I do, however, think that we can, perhaps, do a little bit better job in what we incentivize, and how it relates and corresponds to other state expenditures, and particularly, as Senator Howard indicated, our Medicaid expenditures. And I will, Senator Janssen, at a later time, hopefully, have the opportunity to speak to some of them issues. Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR JANSSEN: Thank you, Senator Synowiecki. Senator Baker, your light is next, and this is your third time.

SENATOR BAKER: Thank you, Senator Janssen, for reminding me that that was my...this is my third time. I'll have to borrow some from the Chair. Yes, I want to talk about some specifics. We have some "feel good" comments here and so on, and I appreciate that, but when the bill...when we drafted it in committee, and like I said, there were a lot of people involved with this--it wasn't just me, by any means, or just any group of people--there's a large contingent of folks out there--we did put the wage requirements in here, which was not in...is not in the current statute. Sixty percent of the state average, which I believe is \$19,000--some they have to pay to qualify for any of these things, so...and also, then, the carrot there is, the larger the wage for the better-paying jobs, the credits go up. So I would expect that we're going to see some good-paying jobs. Several senators mentioned how good jobs...the quality of the jobs that were created with...I think Caterpillar was mentioned. I know in a situation there in my area, the ethanol plant, they pay way, way above the state average for jobs, with the benefits on top of that. So that's not a problem. I'm going to go through some specific numbers, to focus again on the rural impact on the provisions in LB 312, and I think, as Senator Connealy mentioned, there are other provisions in the jobs training. And of course, there's other provisions we've included in LB 312--microenterprise, but out of the state total of 1,930 companies with 102,447 employees--and I have to admit this information is a couple of years old, but it's the newest that we can have that's complete--Lincoln metro area has 276 of those companies, 16,000-plus employees. Omaha metro area, which includes Cass, Douglas, Sarpy, Saunders, and Washington County, those five counties, what they're calling the Omaha metro, is