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LB 478

And I urge you to support the bill, as amended.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you, Senator Thompson. Senator Combs is next, followed by Senators Foley, Preister, Redfield, Smith, Cornett, and Mines. Senator Combs.

SENATOR COMBS: Thank you, Madam President and members of the body. I rise in support of the Revenue Committee amendment and the bill. I wanted to give a little background that I got from some information that...regarding Offutt Air Force Base. And in case some of us are not aware, Offutt Air Force Base is the third largest employer in our state. That was a surprise to me. It's facing unique challenges within the defense industry right now. President Bush and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld have expanded the mission at STRATCOM, the global missions of information operations, integrated missile defense, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, missile space operations, global strike, and combating weapons of mass destruction were all assigned to STRATCOM, in addition to their historical responsibility for deterrence. The success of these missions will be largely dependent on the direct support of our local and national defense contractors and subcontractors, who must be able to provide a specially trained workforce. What type of workforce is required? The ideal candidates possess years of military training in space, missile defense, network operations, and warfare, global strike, or intelligence/surveillance/reconnaissance. Along with this valuable experience is the necessity of holding the top-secret or secret security clearance, which enables the employee to immediately begin work. And the term "work immediately" is really crucial in the defense industry. When a contract is awarded, the winning company does not have a flexible time frame to add to their employee base like you would in other industries. When you call the registry and ask for a nurse for the night shift, you pretty much have a good chance of filling that need for that position. Not so with STRATCOM. Work begins immediately, and usually within the space of weeks. To remain competitive in the national scope of contract building, the local defense industry relies on strong recruitment base in Nebraska. The recruitment of retiring and separating military professionals who possess the specialized training and security