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serious concerns about that. And there are many reasons for that, but I suggest to you that one of the reasons is because we have not kept up the minimum wage, and the lower part of the wage scale has accordingly deteriorated in purchasing power, along with the deterioration of the minimum wage's purchasing power itself. So not only is the lower class economically, and the middle class hurt by the low minimum wage itself, but as the purchasing power of the minimum wage deteriorates, the middle class is further burdened with taxes to take care and to support social programs that augment the low income of the working poor. There was a point in time in this country when many of us participated in what was a kind of small revolution with regard to welfare programs, and we made some big changes in terms of being sure that people had to go out and find jobs and work. And the whole idea was that the work would support the workers, and there would not be need for as many social programs in as many different areas as we have them--food and child care and housing. But what has happened is that the wages at the lowest end have not increased in amount sufficient to keep up with inflation, and the result of that is deterioration, not only in the wages, but a deterioration in social programs supported by the state, in the sense that we have more of them because now, instead of supporting people who don't work, we support people who work. So having said all that by way of a preliminary introduction, I want to stop at that point in time and let Senator Cunningham take up the committee amendments, so that you get in hand and in mind the committee amendments and what they do. And while you're listening to Senator Cunningham, I've passed out to you a concept sheet for the bill, which explains what the committee amendment looks like with the update amendment that comes after the committee amendment, and it is the committee amendment with the update amendment that I'm hoping you will see fit to advance. Senator Cudaback, thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator. (Visitors introduced.) On with discussion of the...Senator...there are committee amendments, and I overlooked you. I'm sorry. I got enthused with the group of students. Senator Cunningham, to open, as Chairman of the committee.