

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

March 29, 2006 LB 554

SENATOR REDFIELD: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. I was looking at the handout that Senator Beutler gave to us, and number 11 there he quotes a study on the impact of an increase in minimum wage on small businesses, and they actually look at the data in the states that have increased the minimum wage and what the growth is. And I have to read it from here because I actually had gone to the study on-line and looked at it, and what they had determined was that in the higher minimum wage states the growth rate for businesses was 6.2 percent and...versus 4.1 percent in the states that had not adjusted the minimum wage. Retail employment had grown by 6.1 percent, versus 1.9 percent in the other states. Those are compelling statistics. I would like to see some other studies that might verify that, because we all know that sometimes there are other factors involved. These states clearly may have other reasons why economic development is boosting their employment and retail growth, but I think that we need to take that into consideration. I will be bringing, on Select File, an amendment that would adjust or put back in a wage for those who are under 17, because I'm concerned about our unemployment rate for young people. I think they need a start in life and I think it's a win-win if we can work together here in that. And I also would bring to your attention that we have in our statutes, in Chapter 48-1202, the exemption that says any individual employed by the United States or by the state or any political subdivision thereof would then be exempt from this, and I think that we ought to take that out of our statute books so that we, in fact, are not creating a discrepancy between the federal minimum wage for our employees and others. And I have talked to some of the agencies and they clearly would intend to follow the minimum wage that is recommended in the bill, but I think that our statutes should agree with that as well. That's what I'll be doing on Select File if this bill moves forward. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Redfield, thank you for your information on the fact that there is, according to that study anyway, greater growth in states that have a higher minimum wage. And there are a lot of studies. It's hard to isolate this factor, I think, personally. But I can see some logic