

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

April 10, 2006 LB 554

SENATOR BAKER: Thank you, Senator Smith. Senator Redfield.

SENATOR REDFIELD: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. The inflation factor is gone in the bill that is before you. It is not in the amendment. If you think the bill is too expensive, you should be voting for the amendment, because the amendment lowers the rate in the third year to \$6.26. That's 20 cents less than it is in the bill that is before us. The other thing that it does is it allows \$5.15 for those who are under 17. Senator Smith is talking about under 19. Actually, 17 was the number we looked at, because we were thinking that they were still in high school at age 17. A lot of times we have kids that are out of high school. They may be working full time at that point, and that's why 17 was selected. I want to tell you that Henry Ford had a great idea at one time. He started a car factory, and that assembly line allowed him to produce automobiles at a more efficient cost, and his goal was two things--to make an automobile that was affordable by the average person and, second, to pay a wage to his workers so that they could actually afford to buy his automobile. It was a good idea, and it was about how the impact trickles down to other businesses. If the people don't make the money, they can't afford to buy the goods. It doesn't benefit the businesses down the road. Now the other thing I want to point out to you--besides the fact that the amendment makes the bill less costly to businesses, so even if you're against the bill, you should be voting for the amendment--is the fact that in states that have put the minimum wage on the ballot for the approval of the people, it has consistently passed. There have been only two times where it hasn't. California passed by 61 percent in 1996. In Florida it passed by 71 percent; in Nevada it passed by 68 percent. Oregon put it on the ballot--twice they raised it, once by 57 percent and again, higher wages, at 52 percent. Washington passed it by 66 percent. And I polled the district this summer and I got back 75 percent. Now we can sit back and we can do nothing, and that's an option. We're running out of time. But I can tell you that this Legislature did nothing when the citizens were asking for term limits, and they went out and they put it on the ballot and they passed it. And when they did it, they put in two terms. If we had done it, we might have done three, like Senator Schrock proposed. We