

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

April 10, 2006 LB 554

might have been able to repeal it after the public mood decided that maybe it wasn't such a good idea. But we shut ourselves out by not doing anything and allowing the people to put it on the ballot. Well, 75 percent of the people in my district are saying they want to raise the minimum wage in the state of Nebraska. If they put it on the ballot, do you think that they'll put on there \$5.59 for the first year? Probably not. And then you won't be able to do a doggone thing about it. So I'm looking at the factors that I have here from the Brookings Institute (sic). It says from 2000 to 2002, in just two years, those qualifying for the EITC on the federal income taxes in the state of Nebraska were one of the highest growth rates in the nation--12 percent increase of people who are eligible for the EITC. That means they were workers trying hard to make a living, and yet 12 percent more have fallen below, because we know that the EITC is based on the federal poverty wages, and those grow with an inflation factor. So year by year, we are going to increase the number of people who qualify for our government taxpayer supported subsidies. That EITC is paid for you...

SENATOR BAKER: One minute.

SENATOR REDFIELD: ...at the federal level; it will be paid for under our tax cut at the state level, and the other programs that we support based on that federal poverty wage, which does increase when our minimum wage does not, and it will be the taxpayers who will continue to pay. So think about the future, think about what the public might do in putting it on the ballot, if we are not willing to move it. I'm willing to have more discussion before Select File, but we don't have much time if we're going to move forward this year. Thank you.

SENATOR BAKER: Thank you, Senator Redfield. Senator Smith, I understand you want to modify your amendment.

SENATOR SMITH: Yes. Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to modify my amendment with a new amendment. I missed the reference to 17-year-olds in two other places on the amendment and wish to replace 17 with 19.