

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

March 24, 2004 LB 1049

matter of percentage, although we don't punish them as extremely as some other states who both give more generous benefits and make fewer disqualifications. I know this because I've served as an administrative law judge in this area for about three years. Nebraska has the highest rate of disqualifying workers and making them wait as practically anybody in the country. But when they do, they don't have permanent disqualifications, and when you get on the program, you get a middle to lower amount of benefits than you do in other states. In the whole rough justice of the system, the system is relatively low rates with lots of people that get knocked off for a period of time, and at the same time they aren't knocked off permanently and they do get to get back on regardless of how they wound up in the unemployment pool. My goal is generally to make appropriate increases in the benefits when I can, knowing that this body is generally very tough on this program, and I don't seem...I don't see the need to readjust how many disqualifications or how onerous they are. I'm going to vote against the expansion to 13. Our system is not generous. Our system is not lavish. We make many workers wait for their benefits and we have a system that you can challenge, and although you can get your benefits back, you can put a family on the rack for 4 weeks, 6 weeks, while they wait for a decision to come down about whether or not they get benefits. And in the end, we have a low unemployment rate in this state. We don't have people that are bilking this system. We have the highest number of women working of any place in the country. We have a very large number of two-income families. We have lots of underemployment in which people have one or two jobs that they add together to try to get to 40 hours a week. The workers in this state are not wary of working. They would like better jobs and they'd be happy to work 40 hours a week at one job that paid them a living wage. In my est...you know, in my perspective, I don't think the unemployment system for what is a modest problem is significant. And by the way, I would have opposed the Loudon amendment. I think, in fact, the system doesn't need to be changed in either one of the two ways that this bill will change it, in my estimation. I'm going to vote against the bill when it comes time to advance it.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you, Senator Landis. (Visitors introduced.) Senator Friend, you are recognized to speak.