

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Chambers moves to amend the bill. (Read the Chambers amendment found on page 565 of the Legislative Journal.)

SPEAKER MARVEL: The Chair recognizes Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and Senator Schmit, since this bill looks like it is going to go and I raised an issue I have an obligation to try to address that issue and that is what the intent of the amendment is. There is a program which has been advertised recently on Omaha radio stations that allows tax credits to businesses who hire those who are considered hard to employ. The Federal Government is underwriting that program. It is subsidizing businesses to the tune of \$4,200 for the first two years that one of these people would be hired. That is an entirely voluntary program. Nobody is coerced in any sense. A person who is locked up in a penitentiary or one of these other institutions is in a position to want to get out from behind those walls even doing work for less than the minimum wage in some instances just to be outside of the walls. So I don't think the Legislature ought to take advantage of this particular situation and subsidize businesses by letting them get this convict labor and pay these people less than the amount that anybody else would be paid for doing the work. I am sure that the convicts would not be allowed to continue working if they didn't perform to the same standard of quality that the other employees did, so if they are going to have to do the work they should get the pay. Since their money is going to be confiscated and doled out according to the discretion of the director and others, they should at least be given a degree of the dignity that people always say attaches to labor and the thing that imparts dignity to labor is to get an adequate compensation for what you do. There is nothing dignified in one person having to follow the direction, instruction or orders of another person. The only time dignity can be imposed in a situation like that is if it is by mutual agreement that in exchange for labor the hirer gives a certain amount of money in exchange and the one working is able to use that money to discharge certain obligations and meet certain responsibilities. So I think there is more here than just dealing with mere "convicts" and I will put that in quotes. Despite the fact that they have been convicted and sentenced to the penitentiary or are put in some of these other institutions, to me they still are human beings and if we are going to degrade the concept of labor by taking those who are held involuntarily, holding a carrot before them and say, this is a way that you can get some time on the outside and then