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LB 470

laws, and the committee amendment is designed to abide by the federal law that requires some requalifying employment filing a quit or discharge for misconduct. The amendment was necessary to specify a specific amount of earnings to be earned in subsequent employment since current Nebraska requires no employment filing a quit or discharge for misconduct to be eligible for the unemployment benefits. The committee amended the bill with the \$400 amount. I move that the committee amendment be adopted.

SPEAKER MARVEL: The motion is the adoption of the committee amendments. Senator Johnson, your light is on.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker and members of the body, I have a hard time understanding the committee amendment to the bill. As I read the note to the bill, it says that the bill itself is required by virtue of changes in federal law. I assume, however, that was not true for the committee amendment. And what the committee amendment does is it continues to...frankly, it continues to penalize some poor employee who has quit his job or in the alternative was discharged for misconduct, and, you know, I think you can beat an employee to death and I think we are in the process of doing it. We have now reduced his benefits to half benefits by passage of the movement of 394, and this time we are saying, if by some chance that individual is not able to find work within the time period under the regular unemployment compensation program, then he will not be allowed extended benefits unless he has actually procured some job or received wages for it in the interim and then he can come into the extended benefit concept. Now one of the principal benefits of unemployment compensation is to tide workers over. It may well be that the individual had some degree of fault at the outset....had some degree of fault at the outset before the loss of the job, otherwise he wouldn't have been discharged for misconduct or he wouldn't have quit without good cause. But to continue to penalize that employee and his family, and that is the important point in my opinion, and his family, when in fact he has demonstrated to the Department of Labor that he is actively attached to the job market, he is making an earnest job search but he can't find one, by denying him the extended benefits coverage, as I understand that, that is almost entirely federally funded, but by denying him those extended benefits seems to me to be wrong. And I think that we have carried in a sense our desire for a certain amount of punitiveness too far, and I recommend that the committee amendment be rejected.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Maresh, are you going to close?

SENATOR MARESH: Yes. I would like to add that \$400 was