

certainly true but just let me point out to the body that previously negative account employers were assessed only 1 percent more than the positive account employers and now I think it is up to 2 percent or a little more than that.

SPEAKER NICHOL: One minute.

SENATOR HEFNER: The positive account employers are still subsidizing, are still subsidizing the negative account employers even after this increase that we passed several years ago and so I would urge you to support the Barrett amendment. I think right now it is fair and reasonable.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Hall, then Senator Chizek.

SENATOR HALL: Mr. President, members, I will rise, I think Senator Barrett knows, to oppose his amendment. I think 126 is a little low. Basically what we are talking about here is \$14. We are currently at \$120 max. My amendment proposes to raise that to \$154. Our average benefit collected is 99 dollars and about 35 cents. With my amendment in place, the average benefit collected would be about 113 dollars and 35 cents. So we are really talking about a \$14 increase on the average. We are not talking about a lot of money. The tax, because of the condition that our fund is in, because of the good job that the Department of Labor does in managing the fund, there would be no increase to employers. There would be no additional burden. We are not talking about levying a higher tax on the employers. We just wouldn't make quite as much money on the fund if it had been in place last year. We would have only made 8 million instead of 11 million. I mean the money is there. All we are saying is let's give these unemployed people a little more equity during the time that they are out of a job. The average benefit weekly time that you can draw is 26 weeks. In the State of Nebraska, the average last year was 13 weeks. So people are not using the unemployment as a means to get by. They are not sucking off the unemployment fund. All they are doing is taking it while they are out of a job, while they look for another job. We are only collecting, the people are only collecting for half of the time allowed. We are only looking at 13 weeks. In 13 weeks time they have been able to, on the average, been able to find a different job, a job that gives them at least an income greater than their unemployment I am sure. In some cases they go to work for less because there