

weekly wage. Well, in the State of Nebraska, we are nowhere near that and I am not standing here saying that we should. It would be...this is one time where I would say that I would like to see us go with the federal suggestion but I think that \$126 that we just adopted is not fair and is not an adequate increase. Senator Hefner earlier mentioned, and I am sorry I didn't catch it, that the unemployment compensation is not subject to state or federal tax and that is not true. It is not taken out at the time the compensation is received but it must be added to the income tax or income submitted at tax time so that it is subject to federal and state. It is counted as income. That is something new. It has only been done in the last couple of years but it is subject to both federal and state. What the amendment does is hit a happy medium, I think, between where we were at two years ago and where I would like us to be in a year. So I would hope that you would find 138 a reasonable amount. At \$138 we are looking at approximately an \$8 increase or we are going from \$99 and change to \$107 and change for the average benefit recipient. This is not a drastic increase. It is not a very big increase at all and, again, it is not going to cost the employers a dime. The money is there. The money has been there. We are doing one heck of a job managing our fund. We are very tight at the Department of Labor in terms of how we spend our money, how we invest it, and how we collect it. We are also very strict on how we disqualify people. So I think to say let's give these people a more fair and adequate benefit amount so that they are able to look for work, able to retain their homes, able to pay their utility bills, able to feed their children, I think that is only fair. I think basically all this is is an adequate amount, the increase that I propose at \$138, and I would hope that you would support it. Thank you.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Haberman, please.

SENATOR HABERMAN: Mr. President, members of the body, I think one thing that everybody has overlooked in the debate is Senator Hall's bill in its original form would cost the state agency, the political subdivisions \$3,410,000. That is a lot of money and I don't know where we are going to get it. I don't know what his new proposal will be but I would ask the members of this body to keep that in mind when you vote on this auction that is going on because we did start out at \$3,410,000 and we are not going to know where we end