

to provide the workers an adequate amount of unemployment compensation. We are not dealing with class conflict between management on the one hand and labor on the other hand. We are dealing with a social contract, that social contract being the provision of an adequate amount of unemployment compensation benefits to tide families over to the next job.

SENATOR NICHOL: One minute.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: So while it is correct that the Barrett language which we adopted which would raise the benefit level from 120 a week to 126 a week reflects the increase in cost of living over the last two years. The \$120 a week figure that we adopted in 1983 was woefully inadequate in relationship to national standards of what the appropriate level should be. You and I have an obligation to the laboring men and the laboring women in our state and their families, and to the maintenance of the social fabric to continue to strive toward the ideal which is an unemployment compensation benefit program to provide benefits at approximately two-thirds of the lost wage level for a reasonable period of time until a displaced worker does find work. Senator Hall's amendment moves in that direction. We should adopt that amendment.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Hefner, please, then Senator Lundy.

SENATOR HEFNER: Mr. Speaker and members of the body, just a clarification of what I spoke on before. It is true that some of these unemployment compensation benefits may be taxable and I didn't know this but it was adopted under the 1984 federal code. It is 12,000 on single, 18,000 on joint return. So you can see that if a person would be on unemployment compensation say for the full 26 weeks that he or she probably wouldn't reach the 12,000 or the 18,000 in a joint return. Also let me address on what an employee can work if he or she is drawing unemployment compensation benefits and I think Senator Chizek talked to that just a little bit. You can earn up to one-half of the benefits that you are receiving. For instance say that you would be getting \$120 a week in unemployment compensation benefits, you would be able to earn up to \$60, or if you was getting \$100 a week, you would be able to earn up to \$50. So like on if you was earning \$120, why then you would be able to earn up to \$60, that would be \$180 a week. I just wanted to