

committee amendments to LB 343. Have you all voted? Record the vote, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 26 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President, on adoption of committee amendments to 343.

PRESIDENT: The committee amendments are adopted. Senator Barrett, you are recognized to explain the bill.

SENATOR BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. President and members. LB 343 again authorizes the Commissioner of Labor to convert the unemployment insurance program from a wage reporting system, as we know it today, to a wage requesting system to improve the effectiveness of the program and also comply with new federal requirements for income and eligibility verification. This is made necessary today because the Department of Labor has informed the Business and Labor Committee that we are in jeopardy of losing a share of approximately \$20 million in federal funds that have been set aside for states which do pass legislation like this to become wage reporting states. The present system that we have says that the commissioner requests wage information from an employer when an employee has filed a claim for benefits. This simply says now, as amended, that the reports will be filed with the department on a quarterly basis. It is necessary because by October 1 of '88 the quarterly earnings information can be used by such agencies as DAS...or DSS, Agriculture, the Department of Labor and others as another guideline to insure that assistance payments and unemployment benefits are given to eligible recipients. We need to gather this information for at least five calendar quarters prior to October 1 of '88 so that all of the necessary earnings data can be made available. The Labor Department data processing staff estimates that it will take from 9 to 12 months to do the necessary programming to gather and store this important data. Mr. President, I would move that the bill, as amended, be advanced to E & R initial.

PRESIDENT: Senator Hefner, do you wish recognition? May we have order in the Chamber please, so we can hear the speaker.

SENATOR HEFNER: Mr. President, I have a question of Senator Barrett.