

benefit system do reflect, do clearly reflect the major industrial states, the major population states, the major labor states, and we are comparable to all of them. There is only one of them that is higher, as I say, that is New York and they have offsets and other things. Now how did 42 states get, how did 42 states get to the other system? And I think this is important for you to know because it is how a whole bunch of things happened. In 1972, I do wish you'd listen, in 1972, a fellow named Richard Milhouse Nixon was in the White House. And Richard Milhouse Nixon had a lot of problems other than simply social security, a variety of other things. The Republicans were constantly getting blamed for this increase, or that increase in social security, this increase, or that increase in unemployment, or one thing and another. So the Republicans, under Richard Nixon, committed this country to what has proved to be one of the most fatal things we ever did, and I hate to say it was done by the Republicans, but it was. Richard and his friends created something called COLA. That's right. It was created by the Republicans, unfortunately, not the Democrats. Why did they do it? Because they wanted to avoid that annual battering they were getting from the public, or blame they were taking for this increase, or that increase in this program or that. And, so, they tied it into "inflation", took it theoretically out of the legislative forum. And what happened next? Most states said, well, this is such a good idea at the federal level, let's do this same thing in our state level in such things as workmen's comp...

SENATOR CARSTEN: One minute.

SENATOR DECAMP: ...and these other areas. And so they did. And we've reaped the harvest of COLA. And what effectively the proposal is here today is to move into this COLA area of automatic increases when it is time to be moving out, and many states are now moving out, and the federal government is finding the flaws in it, so they are moving out. I have a number of other things, but obviously I've run out of time. I would just simply say our program is working. It is subject to legislative review and oversight on a regular basis. In terms of fairness, it is as fair or better than most states, compares favorably with the best labor states, the best industrial states. The increase that would immediately take place, over the next three years if you pass Peter's bill, the minimum increase is another