

workmen's comp. And if they do, it is only because it's a strategic choice so they can have their own bill to oppose a raise of any larger amount. There is no magnanimity in this fight. It is a tooth and nail struggle on each and every issue that moves the equilibrium one way or the other. It seems to me that all there has been out of that is a kind of a dog fight that waits, hopefully, until some kind of an electoral opportunity comes up, and then that, too, creates even greater pressures for doing something that is politically acceptable as opposed to what systematically should be the way we do business here. This is not, by the way, the cost of living that we think of, which is tied to consumption patterns. The consumer price index is based, as you know, on prices. That is different than an index based on wages. Wages are based on productivity. They are not based on consumption patterns or supply patterns from foreign countries. If you are talking about a cost of living index it is much better, in my mind, that it be tied to the actual market cost of labor, not the prices of the consumer price index. So it seems to me that this is not nearly as dangerous an index, if that is the argument. And the analogy that Senator DeCamp makes to federally impose COLAs really is a different index than this one. I represent north Lincoln. North Lincoln is the 44th poorest district in the State of Nebraska. I represent people who sell their labor. It is a blue collar district. They don't have a lot of ownership or equity in businesses. They probably don't have a high profile of stock benefits.

SENATOR CARSTEN: One minute.

SENATOR LANDIS: What they do is they get up in the morning, they put on their work clothes, they go out, they work with their hands, they are skilled craftsmen perhaps, but they sell their labor. If they get banged up, if they can't do their labor they have lost their wealth-making power. Workmen's comp is the only way that they can keep their wealth-making machinery, if you will, together. And anything that cuts into their purchasing power, the purchasing power of that wealth-making ability pains them and, of course, pains me. Over time, not the last three years, but the historical trend of those very hard political fights has been to minimize the purchasing power of workmen comp benefits. The purchasing power, today, is...

SENATOR CARSTEN: Time.