

body. I used to hire people. I don't anymore because there isn't enough margin in my business to do that. And Senator Hall is right in part of what he says. In any market that is competitive, the minimum wage really doesn't apply. It doesn't apply to very many employers in the state but it does apply to some and for those that it does apply to we should try to keep the field as level as possible. Oldehoeft out in Exeter was telling me about his grocery store and this has nothing to do with...the conversation had nothing to do with the grocery store, but more to do with the general state of the economy in small town Nebraska. And he was telling me that as recently as ten years ago that he and his wife, their two children, three full-time employees and a couple high school people working in stocking worked in that grocery store. Today, there are no jobs for anyone except he and his wife try to change off, keep it open and eke out a living. Now that doesn't have any bearing, really, on this bill but it does show you the situation that can exist if labor costs on the basic minimum are phased in at a rate that people can...can't afford so the job doesn't exist. But under 297, as written, and I'm going to try to explain this one more time, you would have one class of employers who would be required to pay, beginning April 1, 1991, if they employed four more people and had sales of less than \$362,500 a state minimum wage of \$4.25 an hour. Then you have the grandfathered in employers who, if they have sales between \$362,000 and \$500,000 would come under the federal minimum wage law but they would come under it at \$3.35 an hour. Then you have the third class of employers who are those that have \$500,000 or more in sales or are engaged in interstate commerce and they would come under the \$4.25 per hour again minimum wage. It's something that we've not been able to find the correct language to address, I think, in our state minimum wage laws and that's what I'm trying to do with this amendment is to, at the minimum, provide a phase-in for the smaller employers in the state so they don't take a 90-cent-an-hour hit in the case that it applies to them. And I'm sure that there are a number of the smaller employers that are hiring beginning people, basically younger people, that are doing that at a minimum wage because no one else will hire them. Those jobs may well not exist if it costs \$4.25 an hour. That's not a prediction, that's a supposition, because I cannot predict what is going to happen in all of the thousands of small businesses out there that do employ people. Trying to cushion the shock a little bit, trying to provide a competitive playing field with those "notch employers" under the federal minimum wage standards. Thank you.