

SENATOR ABOUD: But we can determine that in looking at the premiums we can make a comparison. We can look to the State of Oregon. Now, Senator Landis was right on point when he said we look to the State of Oregon, we look to their premiums and that was the basis, that three-year reduction in the amount of premiums. The plan has been a success based solely on the premiums and if we have employers out there that are not following this safety committee, this bill could be viewed as a failure because we will not see a reduction in the overall premium rate for companies in this state. So I really...we have to determine whether or not we're either going to have a safety committee that is going to be useful, that those minority of employers that seek not to encourage safety in the workplace for their employees...

SPEAKER BAACK: Time.

SENATOR ABOUD: Thank you.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Abboud. Before I proceed to the next speaker, I would like to introduce some guests of the Legislature. They are guests of Senator Witek. There are 30 fourth graders from Trinity Christian in Omaha and their teacher. Would you folks please stand and be welcomed by the Legislature. Thank you for being here. Senator Ashford.

SENATOR ASHFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members. I haven't spoken on this for a couple of days but I do want to make a couple of points. The last time I spoke was on the amendment which would have struck the independent medical examiner and I spoke against that. I still believe that the independent medical examiner is a positive part of this bill, but I'm starting to having, as Senator Will said, you finally get the idea, you know, that there's going to be some efforts to cut off debate and to suspend the rules and I just...for my...what I was trying to say when I made that speech was that though I do support the independent medical examiner, I do think that there are some things that need to be discussed on this bill and, as I mentioned at that time, I have tried probably 100 workmen's comp cases in the 15 or 16 years I've been practicing. I also represent small business and I have a small business and I'm aware of the increases in the cost of workmen's compensation. I'm also aware of the difficulties employees have in recovering workmen's compensation benefits. So I can see both sides of