

immediate benefit. People generally move up in their pay scale over time, but people who make that amount today won't get an immediate benefit. If, over time, they move into a higher bracket they will do better. But as of today the answer is that they would not receive an economic benefit under the bill.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: All right. And with the economy being what it is, there are some people who are making that nine ninety-five an hour who might also begin to make less than that and slide out of that top category.

SENATOR LANDIS: Yes, they would continue to receive two-thirds of their average weekly wage. But you're right, you can have them one way or the other on the line of that nine ninety-five.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: But that 52 percent who will not gain any monetary increase in benefits still are affected by the rest of the bill when it comes to the physician choice or lack thereof under certain circumstances, and the managed care, health care provisions of the bill.

SENATOR LANDIS: That is correct.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: And some people could construe those provisions as taking from the employees certain rights which they now enjoy in those areas.

SENATOR LANDIS: Not only some people, but I think you characterized it in that way, Senator Chambers, if I recall correctly.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Senator Landis. Members of the Legislature, I've been working with Senator Landis to take away some of what I consider to be the unfairness in this bill. But even with those amendments being adopted, I don't like the bill and I don't see it as being fair and equitable. I see it as an instance where the hierarchy of the AFL-CIO sold out the majority of workers in the state. And those making the nine ninety-five are not going to get so much more in monetary benefits that it justifies penalizing all of the workers in the state. It is really interesting to watch such a large number, in actual numbers, and such a large percentage of the population being dealt with in this fashion when there is the contention between management and insurance providers. I don't believe that workers' comp premiums have to be as high as they are.