

SPEAKER BAACK: Time.

SENATOR LANDIS: ...so that they can protect themselves, choose their options, plan ahead. That, too, I think, will improve the current system. I think those benefits are to everyone, high wage earner or low wage earner alike, and that's a quid pro quo worthy of the bill.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Landis. Senator Coordsen.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the body. I hate to get involved in this high level discussion between my two esteemed colleagues. But I felt, although Senator Landis covered a good number of the nonmonetary benefits in the program, that it was somehow required of me to say several things on behalf of those people who are making, as a salary, less than \$20,000 a year, which is about what that figures out. I would remind the body that a totally different system in the workers' compensation court existed just several short years ago. And it was my experience to have, my unhappy experience, I guess, to have a number of people who had claimed injury in the course of their employment and were not being served. I recall one lady that was nearly two and a half years and had not received any of her medical claim benefits paid, nor any weekly compensation. And to quote Senator Chambers, perhaps, or someone equally as learned, I believe that justice delayed is justice denied. We were successful, in the last session of the Legislature, in restructuring the court system. The insurance industry didn't want it, really. The employers didn't want it, really, because the longer a decision was delayed the less apt they had to pay or the longer they were able to earn interest on their investments, or whatever. I don't think that the attorneys were overly excited about it because the system was working fairly well for them. But the justices became uncomfortable with their backlog, and we explored a new system. And it's my understanding that it's working well in the cases filed under...And that was done all for the injured workers. And we were only covering up to \$20,000 a year. Senator Landis covered the nonmonetary benefits of 757 in its current language. And it's my belief, based upon a limited amount of experience, that this bill will go a long way toward removing the adversarial relationship that had grown into place between employer/insurance companies that are providing workers' comp coverage and people who are claiming injury on the job, most certainly those injuries that are not specifically identified