

ineligible to receive unemployment benefits since such firing is considered to be a discharge for cause, is that correct?

Secretary WIRTZ. We are checking that. I don't have the complete report on the States. I cannot give you an up-to-date count but it is true that in a number of States that is the consequence.

Mrs. SULLIVAN. Can you tell us why the Department of Labor, in supervising unemployment insurance, accepts the policy that the discharge of a worker for wage garnishment is a discharge for cause, making him ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits? Could the Department change this policy without statutory amendments?

Secretary WIRTZ. The Congress has in its wisdom taken the position we should not go any further with State standards than we have so far gone. The particular point to which you refer has not been raised, but the effort last year to extend the standard concept, the Federal standard concept, was rejected and so the answer would have to be that we do not, in line with the last part of your question, now have authority to prescribe the standard.

Mrs. SULLIVAN. Mrs. Dwyer?

Mrs. DWYER. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I, too, would like to say that it is wonderful to have Mrs. Peterson back on the Hill. It is always a joy to work with you here.

Mr. Secretary, is it my understanding that you prefer the garnishment provisions in this bill excluded?

Secretary WIRTZ. To answer that question one way or the other would be a little deceptive. I think quite sincerely we must find out more about what ought to be done with respect to it. I would—if the question is simply whether we go for straight abolition as provided in title II of H.R. 11601, I would have to say that I think that this is very possibly not the right answer, at least not in that form. We have to find what the right answer is with respect to these various points that I have mentioned.

I don't mean to evade your question. But I want our answer to be constructive. As the President has said in his poverty message, we must take steps to meet this problem.

If your question is whether I think we should take that step at this time, immediately at this time, I would think not.

Mrs. DWYER. Thank you very much. That would be all.

Mrs. SULLIVAN. Mr. Stephens?

Mr. STEPHENS. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for coming before us.

As I gather from your statement on page 3, that you would prefer this bill as it came out of the Senate?

Secretary WIRTZ. I would argue for it as it went into the Senate. I don't think it was strengthened there. I recognize, of course, the practical considerations involved.

Mr. STEPHENS. What you mean, then, by the original provisions of S. 5, is not what came to us but what was originally introduced?

Secretary WIRTZ. I want to make clear that I do support many provisions of S. 5 as it came out of the Senate, but I made no bones, and Mrs. Peterson has made none, that there are some other things we think should be done that were in S. 5 as it was first reported.

Mr. STEPHENS. In respect to garnishment, we are all interested in it. But I think I would agree with you that we need to look into it more before we make a complete prohibition of it. Because as these areas