

May 4, 1979

LB 596

of need and what is not a standard of need. I have a bill before the body, LB 35, which was advanced by the Public Health and Welfare Committee which pretty carefully articulates what ought to be in a standard of need. Now that bill has been languishing on General File and I suspect will languish beyond the adjournment of this session though it might not. So what I have done, what I did about a month ago is I went over to the Welfare Department and spoke to the new director, Mr. John Knight, one of our former state legislators, and in addition, a former member of the Appropriations Committee and I talked to his staff and we had a long conversation about LB 35. The new welfare director said to me this, he said, Johnson, why don't we just follow the federal poverty guidelines in terms of our standard of need. If we follow the federal poverty guidelines in terms of our standard of need, we won't need any money whatsoever for the study that your LB 35 takes to articulate adequate standards of need and we can just implement that administratively and it will be relatively easy for us to work with and, in fact, he has prepared for me an amendment to LB 35 which just says simply that the Department of Public Welfare shall no later than June 30, 1980, utilize as the uniform standard of need the federal poverty guidelines released by the Office of Management and Budget as established from the United States Department of Agriculture Regional studies. The department shall annually revise such standards to reflect any change in the federal poverty guideline. And he writes me a note saying that the above, or so it seems to me, would provide the impetus to accomplish your goals. As we work together in the next year, we can, I believe, make it work. Now what I decided to do in light of LB 35's situation is to put in our intent bill that it is the intent of this body that the Department of Public Welfare shall utilize in their need base programs, which is their ADC program and their aid to the blind, aged and disabled program, standards that conform to the federal poverty guidelines. Now it has never been my intention that the utilization of those standards would result in any major deficiency appropriation coming back to this body, and for that reason, I put in the end sentence which says that should it appear to the Department of Public Welfare that the new standards would result in expenditures during the remainder of the fiscal year of more money than was appropriated for its use as assistance payments, it is the intent of this body that the department by regulation establish a percentage factor to be applied uniformly during the remainder of the fiscal year to such standards as to result in aggregate assistance payment expenditures not significantly different from the money appropriated for the fiscal year. Now if we adopt this amendment, we will by intent language

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