

SENATOR JOHNSON: Yes, I am more than happy to answer the, Senator Keyes' absolute concern about the A bill. His concern is well placed. When I originally wrote LB 35 I wrote it so that whatever the standard of need was that we here in this Legislature articulated would ultimately be put in place. Now it was my belief that when that standard of need was put into place we could virtually control our own costs because we always set the appropriations and by setting the appropriation and the grant level and the like, irrespective of what the standard of need was, we could control the cost and I told that to the Public Health and Welfare Committee and I believe it to this day, but nonetheless, there were those in the Welfare Department who seemed to believe that if we just had a standard of need in place and inasmuch as we have nothing in our legislation that specifically limited the appropriational amounts that we might actually be forced to spend a lot more money. So that is the reason, Senator Keyes, why I have come up with these amendments, to make it absolutely clear that that kind of a fiscal note is not going to obtain on this bill.

SENATOR KEYES: Okay, that is one of the things that I wanted to know. In other words, what you are telling me, it is simply like our state aid bill. If the Legislature appropriates \$55,000,000 that is the amount of state aid. If the Legislature, regardless of what the law says, regardless of what the statute says. Now also the Federal Government come through this not so long ago and was giving some federal funds to senior citizens, people who were unable to pay their fuel bill and so forth. Now that has been taken out of the hands of GOCA and the organizations across the state that were handling it and it is going to be put into the hands of welfare, the Department of Welfare, come the first day of February. Now what...is LB 35 going to handle that situation in any way whatsoever? As I understand it now, in order to be eligible to receive this funds that come from the Federal Government you have to be on welfare and I know that there are thousands of people across this state that will not take the funds if they have to go on welfare. Comment on that, will you, Vard?

SENATOR JOHNSON: I am really glad that you asked me that question, Senator Keyes, because I have been very alarmed with what the Nebraska Department of Public Welfare is doing with our energy allocation money and I have been following up on that and this is only as an informational note but in my opinion what the Welfare Department is doing with the energy allocation money represents bureaucracy at its...well in the way it is. I am not going to say at its best or at its worst but at the way it is. The Federal Government sent six