

of these grants. And I guess if they were smart enough to fill out the grant, they would probably be able to come close to completing that B.A. degree.

SENATOR ELMER: Okay, thank you. But it still points out one thing. It narrows the discretion of the committee tremendously by basing it only on financial need and I'd wonder a little about that. With that, thank you.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Withem, please, followed by Senator Pirsch.

SENATOR WITHEM: Senator Elmer, I'd like to take a shot at the question you just asked to maybe add some further clarification. The SSIG program is what we're talking about here. The SSIG program is a program that is based on need. That's federal standards. It doesn't deal...we've got other programs out there that deal with regents scholarships, merit scholarships, athletic scholarships, scholarships based on other rationale. The SSIG program is a program based on need. This bill doesn't change that. We can't change that on the local level. It is a need-base program. The change that would take place if 651 were to pass would be how we define that need. Currently...the current statute, it's arguable, says that you'd have to include the cost of the institution in determining the need. As a matter of fact, it's not only arguable, it is stated that you have to consider the cost of the institution. In practice what has been done is that the commission, because they're under...in fairness to them, because they're understaffed, because we don't appropriate a whole lot of money to them, have tagged onto a federal program, I believe it's the Pell grant program that defines need. It defines need, however, without using the cost of the institution, attending the institution. This bill would clarify and after this bill was drafted we also got an Attorney General's Opinion, it interprets current law as saying that you can't do that. You can't just piggyback on this federal program because our current statute says that you've got to include the cost of the institution in determining what need is. What this bill does is it reiterates that and states it again as legislative policy because the current practice has been to not use the cost of the institution. Now it is true, and I maybe get over to Senator Wesely's remarks here, it is true, and I think that if you look at what the current statute says is supposed to be going on versus what 651 says, and Senator Hall is absolutely correct, there would be no change. If you look at