

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office

February 12, 1998 LB 1041

Health and Human Services, when the health of a child is in jeopardy and the family's financial status is at the root of that, to find ways to help with that. And we do have different programs. They may not qualify for Medicaid, there may be other ways to do it. But I would think financial status should not be a determination of...moving forward in termination of parental rights. That'd be totally inappropriate and wrong. Instead, what you would want to move forward on is working with the parents to find the assistance and to find the help that they need to deal with that. So I...I don't think that you end up with the result that you're suggesting, but I think that it's something we should talk about on the floor in terms of intent of what this legislation should do. And my intent, and I would hope Senator Matzke's and others of the Legislature, would be to not make financial status a predeterminor of decisions on where to place that child. We should instead, if that parent or those parents are working with that child and their financial status is causing a problem, then that's where they need to be addressed, not on the parental rights.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: But my situation that I'm concerned about, Senator Wesely, involves current problems that people who don't have the wherewithal to provide medical care for their children and they're not on assistance, and they've called various agencies and have been told that they don't have any money available for something like this. So if there is nothing concurrently being done to make sure that medical care is available, but we have a mandate from the federal government that the paramount consideration is the health and safety of the child, we cannot gloss over it and say, well, at the time...

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: One minute.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: ...we put this into the law, we will then start to consider if we can find some way to address this problem. If we're going to follow a federal mandate, we should make sure that help is available. And there are many people, again, who are not receiving aid, their families, but they have no coverage for their children, and I'm telling you now, I know of families who have sick children and they cannot get medical care, doctors will not treat them without cost, yet the paramount concern is the health of the child. So let's say you