

May 4, 1979

LB 596

of assistance are the really poor people in this state and they receive this kind of assistance because their social security checks or their SSI checks are extremely modest in amount. Now the state system is one that is based on a standard of need, and I have already discussed standard of need somewhat in this body, and what inevitably happens is when the federal dollar goes up, the state standard of need remains constant, thereby causing a dollar for dollar reduction in the state payouts. So in effect, nobody gets any additional money. Now I understand from our fiscal analyst's office that when they put together the appropriations bills they projected a 6.5% increase in SSI and SSA. They projected that much of an increase and so they put in a little few additional dollars to make certain in effect that the federal increase would be passed through, but they never figured on a 9.9% increase. So my thrust was to say maybe we should go back and appropriate a few additional dollars for the Welfare Department to make certain that all this federal dollar that is fully passed through to the poor Nebraskan who is elderly, blind or disabled. However, in discussions with the fiscal analyst office, they indicated to me that in fact there was enough money in the welfare budget to ensure the full passage through but we ought to at least have intent language which ensures that that be done. So that is all this does. This very first amendment just says, hey, it is the intent of this body that you make certain by adjusting your standards of need accordingly that the federal dollars be fully passed through to the state's aged, blind and disabled people who presently receive some kind of assistance from the state. I would ask your support for this amendment.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Warner and then Senator DeCamp.

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President, I rise to support Senator Johnson's amendment. Essentially what his intent language does is reflect what the department has been doing and as a practical matter as these adjustments are made at the federal level it affects a variety of programs, some of which may have some increase, some which have a decrease, but in any event, I don't think it is substantial upon the total general fund appropriation or it could have a very minimal effect, if any, but it will reflect, I think, what they intend to do in any event but it will give it concurrence of the Legislature. So I would support its adoption.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Keyes, do you wish to be recognized on the amendment?