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LB 125

SENATOR LABEDZ: The way I understand it, and I have a letter from Blue Cross-Blue Shield, they covered claims up to about \$40,000 for state employees last year. When the contract is due again, July 1, 1981, the renewal of the contract, if they don't, I am sure the DAS or whoever does submit the specification should no doubt take into consideration that Blue Cross-Blue Shield paid about \$40,000 for state employees to obtain abortions and the cost should go down if they are not going to have to put out \$40,000 again next year.

SENATOR MARSH: Senator Labeledz, is it possible that in fact the removal of the abortion coverage may increase the cost since childbirth costs considerably more than an abortion cost?

SENATOR LABEDZ: Childbirth will cost more, I am sure, every year because of inflation. We may not notice because every year, from what I understand, the hospitals are charging more for every type of surgery. So I am sure that the Blue Cross-Blue Shield coverage or the other plan that we have might be increased due to inflation but not because we have kept abortion coverage or deleted it. The cost is rising every year. So if there is an increase in coverage for our basic plan, it will not be because abortion has been deleted. It will be because of inflation and the cost of hospitalization today.

SENATOR MARSH: Senator Labeledz, as I understood your last remark, your purpose for bringing this bill was only to save state dollars, is that correct?

SENATOR LABEDZ: Not entirely, you know and I know it is to save human lives.

SENATOR MARSH: But, in fact, ladies and gentlemen, it may cost human lives, the lives of women who are pregnant who do not wish to be pregnant. Senator Labeledz has her choice, the choice of not having an abortion, but with this proposed bill, that choice is removed from other persons who have a different religious persuasion. In fact, that choice would be removed from persons who have supposedly Senator Labeledz' religious persuasion for we read not many weeks ago of the large number of Catholic women who were making use of the opportunity for abortions through a choice. Perhaps in fact this proposal is one more way for the church to try and control its people since when the freedom of choice was given some of them did not choose to do what some religious persuasions, at least the hierarchy say should be done. I do not want another religious persuasion telling me what my choice has to be