

April 7, 1981

LB 478

So you know it is with some, it is with some degree of reluctance that I rise because I don't mean to single out the totally disabled community, so to speak, for my remarks but the truth of the matter is I think before you and I go ahead and adopt this particular amendment that we have some sense as to what the ultimate affect and the ultimate cost would be. Otherwise we may find ourselves in the position that Congress is now finding itself in of inadvertently passing legislation which ultimately had a fairly large price tag down the road.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I talked before about the problems with the listing of the particular disabilities in the Homestead Exemption Act and I talked about the possibility of doing something next year. Senator Beutler, of course, moves a little quicker than some of us and has already proposed a change with this amendment to the law that I was concerned about. I think I am going to support Senator Beutler's proposal and I think perhaps the wording needs to be worked out, perhaps we need to take a little more time with it, as Senator Johnson talked about. I think the intent is right. I think that we need to have a functional definition of disabilities, not just listing the particular ones. I think that we can draft legislation that would particularly address the problems of the question of who is and should be receiving these homestead exemptions for the disabled. The Revenue Department took a look at the Homestead Exemption Act and came up with a number of recommendations. One of those was to consolidate the far-flung disability sections of the act and a bill was drafted, I have copies of it, that are being run off right now, a bill was drafted to deal with those recommendations from the Revenue Department and I think that perhaps we may want to look at that language in light of the Beutler amendment, which together may be used to come up with a particular definition that would better deal with some of the problems that we have. I certainly would like to encourage Senator Pirsch. I think that she has a very good proposal in its limited scope at this point but I think Senator Pirsch should consider perhaps holding the bill and considering this broader change to the disability section that would encompass what she is trying to do and, in fact, broaden the impacts of the change, that we take care of more problems than just the one particular one the bill now deals with. Perhaps as we saw with Senator Landis' amendment, a reworking of the disability section is warranted at this time in this area. We didn't have any income guidelines. We now have those in the bill. We do have a need to clean up