

April 14, 1981

LB 389

SENATOR NICHOL: Senator Haberman, did you wish to talk to the amendments to the...? Okay. The question is, shall the committee amendments be adopted. All those in favor vote aye, opposed vote nay.

CLERK: Senator Nichol voting aye.

SENATOR NICHOL: Have you all voted? Record please.

CLERK: 25 ayes, 2 nays, Mr. President, on adoption of the amended committee amendments.

SENATOR NICHOL: The committee amendments are adopted. Now, Senator Wesely, are you going to take the bill?

SENATOR WESELY: Yes, I will speak first to introduce the bill and I would like to have Senator Schmit follow me. LB 389 is the Family Assistance and Employable Handicapped Assistance Act. What we are trying to do in this bill is to do two things. Number one, when a family has a disabled child in their home particularly, and they are in a situation where a small amount of assistance from the state will help that family keep that child in their home, then we are setting up this program to provide that assistance. What we are trying to do is encourage the family to care for their disabled child in their home. This is, I think, a very worthy step to take. I think that we want to encourage families to care for their children. I think we want to keep our families together and this bill at a minimum of cost would provide that assistance. The other element of the bill deals with the employable handicapped. We have a situation in this state where the handicapped, if they take a job and earn a certain amount of income, virtually lose all the key benefits they need to survive in an independent living situation. That is to say, we have physically handicapped individuals that live in an apartment perhaps. They are trying to take care of themselves. They are receiving benefits from the state that are helping them get by and they decide, I want to support myself. I want to get a job and I want to work and I want to earn some income, and they decide to go out and get that job and they earn that income and, whoop, there goes their benefits basically. And with that they lose their ability to maintain themselves in that independent situation and so they give up their job and go back to living off the state. Well, I think we want to encourage people to work and we have seen these individuals these employable handicapped people. They want to work. They want to earn an income. They want to help support themselves. Well what this bill says is, that we want to encourage that. We want to provide that little bit of assistance that maintains them in their independent living situation and allows them to work and I think that that is a goal that we should all agree to in the State

3483