

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, Senator Wesely, if you hadn't convinced me earlier, I think you would have with that presentation. I am a cosponsor of the bill and I have been accused I guess, of having a conflict of interest. I would tell you very frankly, I probably do. I think I have five young people in my district at the present time who are seriously handicapped and who have for one reason or another, chosen to as much as possible, stay in their own parents' homes. Those parents could have and in some instances have been encouraged not to take the responsibility for those young people but they have done so out of a sense of dedication and responsibility that far outweighs that of most of us. One person said something about the fact that some districts might not benefit from this program. I would thank God if I didn't have anyone in my district who would benefit from this program. I think it is one of those situations where the parents could abdicate the responsibility when the young person reaches that age of majority and turn that individual over to the state. That has happened in the past because of the inability of parents to take care of those children. When it happens those costs can vary anywhere from thirty to fifty thousand dollars annually and we pay for it through the Department of Welfare budget and we don't even know the specifics or the details of the cost. Many times, no matter how dedicated those people are in institutions and we have some very fine people, nonetheless you do not have the family surroundings. You do not have the family compassion or interest in the young person. I know that Senator Wesely has done a lot of work on this bill. I recognize the deep concern that all of you have for the institution of a new program. If I knew of a better solution I would be glad to offer it to you. I can tell you again that there are many people who can with a little assistance, take care of their children in their own home under this kind of a program and enable the young person to become somewhat skilled. A young person who works for me is a paraplegic that works and puts in a lot of hours for me, does an excellent job and I am very proud of him. I think that it is important for us to recognize that those people need encouragement. They need encouragement not discouragement. They need to be told they can be useful persons. They have good minds and the fact that their bodies are handicapped should not make them less than ordinary persons. I know that it is easy to forget about someone might say fifty people. What is fifty people? Not very many votes really, is it? If you want to chop it off it is not going to cost you very much. It wouldn't even cost me very much in my district. The facts are that there are going to be a lot of dollars spent in the State of Nebraska this year that you